Die Mercurij, 31. *Januarij*, 1648.

ORdered by the Commons Assembled in Parliament, That Master *Allen*, do give the Thankes of this House, to Master *Owen*, for the great paines he tooke in his Sermon, Preached before this House this day, at *Margarets Westminster*; And that he be desired to Print his Sermon at large, wherein he is to have the like priviledge of Printing it, as others in the like kind usually have had.

Hen: Scobell Cler: Parl. Dom. Com.

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A SERMON

Preached to the Honourable Houſe of COMMONS, IN PARLIAMENT Aſſembled:

On *January* 31. A day of Solemne Humiliation.

With a Diſcourſe about

TOLERATION,

And the Duty of the Civill Magiſtrate about RELIGION, thereunto Annexed.

Humbly Preſented to them, and all Peace-loving Men of this NATION.

By *John Owen*, Paſtor of the Church of Chriſt, which is at *Coggeſhall* in *Eſſex*.

LONDON,
Printed by *Matthew Simmons*, in Alderſgate Street, 1649.

To the Right Honourable the Commons of *England*, Assembled in Parliament.

Sirs,

IT *hath always suited the* wisedome *of God, to do great* things *in difficult* seasons. *He sets up* wals in troublous times. *Dan.* 9. 25. *His builders must hold* Swords *and* Spears, *as well as* Instruments of labour, Neh. 4. 16. *Tea while* sin *continueth in its course here (which began in Heaven, and having contemporized with the Earth, shall live for ever in Hell.)* Great *works for God, will cause* great *troubles amongst men. The* holy, harmlesse *Reconciler of heaven and earth, bids us expect the* Sword, *to attend his undertakings for, and way of making* peace, *Mat.* 10. 34. *All the* waves *in the world, arise to their height and rearing, from the confronting of the breath of Gods spirit, and the* vapours *of mens corruptions. Hence seasons receive their degrees of* difficulty, *according to the greatnesse and weight of the workes which in them God will accomplish. to their worth and excellency is mans opposition proportioned. This, the instruments of his glory in this generation, shall continually find true to their* present *trouble, and* future *comfort.*

As the days approach for the delivery of the decree, *to the shaking of Heaven and Earth, and all the powers of the World, to make way for the establishment of that* kingdom *which* shall not be given to another people (*the great expectation of the Saints of the most high before the consummation of all*) *so tumults, troubles, vexations and disquietnes, must certainly grow and increase among the sons of men.*

Heb. 12. 26, 27
Dan. 7. 27.
Ego nisi tumultus istos viderem, verbum Dei in mundo non esse dicerem: Luth. de s. A.

A dead *woman (says the Proverb) will not be* carryed *out of her house under four men. Much lesse will living men, of wisedome and power, be easily & quietly dispossessed*

of that ſhare and Intereſt in the things of Chriſt, which long continued uſurpation, hath deluded them into an imagination of being their owne Inheritance. This then being ſhortly to be effected, and the ſcale being ready to turn againſt the man of ſin, notwithſtanding his ballancing it in oppoſition to the witneſſe of Jeſus, with the weight and poyſe of earthly power, no wonder if heaven, earth, ſea, and dry land, be ſhaken in their giving place to the things that cannot be moved. God Almighty having ca led you forth (Right honourable) at his entrance to the rolling up of the Nations heavens like a Scroll, to ſerve him in your Generation in the high places of Armageddon, you ſhall be ſure not to want experience of that Oppoſition which is raiſed againſt the great work of the Lord, which generally ſwels moſt, againſt the viſible inſtruments therof.

Iſa. 34. 4, 5. Revel. 16. 16.

And would to God, you had only the deuoted ſons of Babel to contend withall, that the men of this ſhaking earth were your only Antagoniſts: that the Maligniy of the Dragons tayle, had had no influence on the Stars of heaven, to prevaile with them to fight in their courſes againſt you. But jacta eſt alea, the providence of God muſt be ſerved, according to the diſcovery made of his owne unchangeable will, and not the mutable intereſts and paſſions of the ſons of men. For verily the Lord of Hoſts hath purpoſed to pollute the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the Honourable of the Earth, Iſa. 23. 9.

Revel. 12. 4.

The contradictions of ſinners againſt all that walk in the paths of righteouſneſſe and peace, with the ſupportment which their ſpirits may receive (as being promiſed) who purſue thoſe wayes, notwithſtanding thoſe contradictions, are in part diſcovered in the enſuing Sermon; the foundation of that whole Tranſaction of things, which is therin held out, in reference to the preſent diſpenſations

of

of providence (*being nothing but an* entrance *into the* unravelling *of the whole* Web *of Iniquity, interwoven of* Civill *and* Ecclesiasticall *Tyranny, in opposition to the kingdome of the Lord Jesus*) *I chose not to mention. Neither shall I at* present *add any thing thereabout, but onely my* desire *that it may be eyed as the* granted Basis *of the following discourse. Only by your very* favourable *acceptation of the making out those* thoughts, *which were the hasty* conception, *and like* Jonah's Gourd, *the* child of a night or two (*which with prayer for a* rooting *in the hearts of them to whom they were delivered, had certainly* withered, *in their owne* Leaves, *had they not received* warmth *and* moysture *from your* commands *i. generall, and the particular* desires *of many of you, to give them a* life *of a few dayes longer*) *I am encouraged to the* annexing *of a few lines, as a free-will offering to* attend *the following Product of obedience.*

Now this shall not be to the Opposition *which you have and shall yet further meet withall, but as to the* cause, *real, or pretended, which are held forth as the* bottom *of that contradiction wherewith on every side you are encompassed.*

The things in reference whereunto, your proceedence *is laden with such* criminations, *as these sad dayes of recompence, have found to be* Comers *portending no lesse then* blood, *are first* Civill, *then* Religious.

For the First, *as their being beyond the bounds of my* Calling, *gives them* Sanctuary *from being called forth to my* consideration, *so neither have I the least thoughts with* Absolom *of a more orderly carrying on of* Affaires, *might my* desires *have any influence into their disposall.* Waiting *at the throne of Grace, that* those *whom God hath* intrusted *with, and* enabled *for the Transaction of these things, may be* directed *and* supported *in their employment, is the utmost of my undertaking herein.*

For

For the other, or Religious things, *the generall interest I have in them as a* Christian, *being improved by the super-added Title of a* Minister of the Gospel (*though unworthy the one Name, and the other*) *gives me not onely such* boldnesse *as accreweth from enjoyed* Favour, *but also such a* Right *as will support mee to* plead *concerning them, before the most* Impartiall Judicature.

And this I shall doe (*as I said before*) *meerly in reference to those* criminations, *which are layd by* conjecturall presumptions *on your Honourable Assembly, and made a* cause *of much of that* opposition *and* contradiction *you meet withall. Now in particular, it is the* Toleration of all Religions *or invented wayes of worship, wherein your* Constitutions *are confidently* Antidated *in many places of the Nation, the* thing it selfe *withall, being held out, as the most* enormous apprehension, *and* desperate *indeavour for the destruction of* Truth *and* Godlinesse *that ever entred the* thoughts *of men, professing the one and the other. The contest hereabout, being* adhuc sub Judice, *and there being no doubt, but that the whole* matter, *commonly* phrased *as above, hath* (*like other things*) *sinfull and dangerous* Extreames. *I deemed it not amisse, to endeavour the powring a little* cold water *upon the* common flames, *which are* kindled *in the breasts of men about this thing. And who knowes, whether the words of a weake* Nothing, *may not by the power of the* Fountaine of Beings, *give some* light *into the determination and* Establishment *of a thing of so great concernment and consequence, as this is generally* conceived *to be. What is in this my weake undertaking,* of the Lord, *I shall begg of* him, *that it may be* received, *what is of* my selfe *I begg of* you *that it may be* pardoned. *That God Almighty would give you to* prove All things *that come unto you in his way, and to hold* fast that which is good, *granting you* unconquerable *Assistance, in* constant *perseverance, is the prayer of,*

Coggeshall, Feb. 28.

Your devoted Servant in
our deareſt Lord:

JOHN OWEN.

A Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons, *Jan.* 31. 1648.

Jeremiah 15. Ver. 19, 20.

——*Let them returne to thee, but returne not thou unto them.*

And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall, and they ſhall fight againſt thee, but they ſhall not prevaile againſt thee: for I am with thee to ſave thee, and to deliver thee, ſaith the Lord.

THE words of my *Text* having a full dependance upon, and flowing out from, the maine ſubject matter of the whole *Chapter*; I muſt of neceſſity take a view thereof, and hold out unto you the minde of God contained therein, before I enter upon the part thereof chiefly intended: And this I ſhall doe with very brieſe Obſervations, that I may not anticipate my ſelfe, from a full *opening and applycation* of the words of my *Text*.

And *this* the rather are my thoughts led unto, becauſe the whole Tranſaction of things between the Lord and a ſtubbornely ſinfull Nation, exceedingly accommodated to the carrying on of the controverſie, he is now pleading with that wherein wee live, is ſet out (as wee ſay) to the *life* therein.

Of the whole Chapter, there be theſe five parts.

1. *The denuntiation of feareſull waſting, deſtroying, judgements againſt* Judah *and* Jeruſalem, *v.* 3. and ſo on to the 10.

2. *The procuring deserving cause of these overwhelming calamities*, vers. 4. and 6.

3. *The inevitableness of those judgements, and the inexorableness of the Lord, as to the accomplishment of all the evill denounced*, vers. 1.

4. *The state and condition of the Prophet*, with the frame and deportment of his spirit, under those bitter dispensations of providence, *vers.* 10. and 15, 16, 17, 18.

5. *The Answer and appearance of God unto him upon the making out of his complaint*, vers. 11, 12, 13, 14. and 19, 20, 21.

My *Text* lyeth in the last part, but yet with such dependance on the former, as inforceth to a consideration of them.

1. There is the denuntiation of fearefull wasting destroying *Judgements* to sinfull *Jerusalem*, *vers.* 2. and so onwards, with some interposed ejaculations, concerning her inevitable ruine, as *vers.* 5, 6.

Here's *death*, *sword*, *famine*, *captivity*, vers. 2. *banishment*, v. 4. *unpittied desolation*, v. 5. *redoubled destruction*, *bereaving*, *fanning*, *spoyling*, &c. v. 6, 7, 8, 9.

That universall devastation of the whole people, which came upon them in the *Babilonish* Captivity, is the thing here intended; The meanes of its accomplishment by particuler Plagues and Judgements, in their severall kinds (for the greater dread and terrour) being at large annumerated: The *faithfulnesse* of God also being made hereby to shine more cleare, in the *dispersion* of that people; doing, not onely for the maine, what before he had threatned, but in particular, executing the Judgements recorded; *Luke* 26. 14. &c. *Deut.* 28. 15. &c. *Fulfilling hereby what he had devised, accomplishing the word he had commanded in the dayes of old*, Lam. 2. 17.

That which hence I shall observe is onely from the *variety* of these particulars, which are held out as the meanes of the intended Desolation.

Obs. 1. *Gods treasures of wrath against a sinfull people, have sundry and various issues for the accomplishment of the appointed end.*

When God *walkes contrary* to a people, it is not alwayes in

in one path, *he hath seven wayes to doe it, and will doe it seven times*, Levit. 26. 24. He strikes not alwayes with one weapon, nor in one place. As there is with him πολυποικιλος χαρις *manifold and various Grace*, 1 Pet. 4. 10. Love and compassion making out it selfe in choice variety, suited to our manifold indigencies: So there is, οργη αποκαλυπτομενη *Rom.* 2. 5. *Stored, treasured wrath*, suiting it selfe in its flowings out, to the *provocations* of stubborne sinners.

The first *Emblem* of Gods wrath against man, was a *flaming Sword turning it selfe every way*, *Gen.* 3. *last*: Not onely in one, or two, but in *all* their paths, he meeteth them with his *flaming Sword*.

As a wilde beast in a Net, so are sinners under inexorable judgements; the more they strive, the more they are enwrapt, and entangled. They shuffle themselves from under one calamity, and fall into another; *As if a man did flee from a Lyon, and a Beare met him; or went into the house and leaned his hand upon the wall, and a Serpent bit him*, *Amos* 5. 19. Oh remove this one *Plague*, saith *Pharoah*; if hee can escape from under this pressure, he thinkes he shall be free: but, *When he fled from the Lyon, still the Beare met him, and when he went into the house, the Serpent bit him.* Isa. 51. 20. Exod. 10. 17.

And as the flaming Sword turnes every way, so God can put it into every thing: To those that cry, *Give me a King*, God can *give him in his anger*; and from those, that cry, *take him away*, hee can take him away in his wrath, *Hosea* 13: 10, 11.

Oh, that this might *seale up instruction* to our owne soules; What *variety* of calamities have we beene exercised withall, for sundry yeares? What *Pharoah-like* spirits have we had under them? Oh that we were delivered this once, and then all were well! How doe we spend all our thoughts to extricate our selves from our present pressures? If this hedge, this pit were passed, wee should have smooth ground to walke in! not considering that God can fill our safest pathes with Snares and Serpents: *Give* us peace, *give* us wealth, *give* us, as we were, with our owne, in quietnesse. Poore creatures! suppose all these desires were in sincerity, and not as with

the moſt they are, faire colours of foule and bloody deſignes; yet if Peace were, and Wealth were, and former things were, and God were not, what would it availe you? Cannot he *Poyſon* your Peace, and *Canker* your Wealth? And *When you were eſcaped out of the field from the Lyon and the Beare, appoint a Serpent to bite you, leaning upon the wals of your owne houſe?* In vaine doe you ſeek to ſtop the ſtreames, while the Fountaines are open; turne your ſelves whither you will, bring your ſelves into what condition you can, nothing but peace and reconciliation with the God of all theſe judgements, can give you reſt in the day of Viſitation: You ſee what Variety of Plagues are in his hand: Changing of condition will doe no more to the avoiding of them, then a Sick mans turning himſelfe from one ſide of the bed to another; during his turning, he forgets his paine by ſtriving to move, being laid down againe, he findes his condition the ſame as before; this is the *firſt thing*, we are under various judgements, from which by our ſelves there is no deliverance.

2. The ſecond thing here expreſt, is the procuring cauſe of theſe various Judgements ſet downe, *v.* 4.

——*becauſe of Manaſſeh ſonne of Hezekiah King of Judah, for that which he did in Jeruſalem.*

Zach. 5. 7. The ſinnes of *Manaſſeh* filled the *Epha* of *Judahs* wickedneſſe, and cauſed the *Talent* of Lead to be laid on the mouth thereof. Oftentimes in the relation of his ſtory, doth the *holy Ghoſt* emphatically expreſſe this; that, *For his ſinne Judah ſhould ſurely be deſtroyed*, 2 *Kings* 21. 11. Yea when they had a little reviving under *Joſiah*, and the bowels of the Lord began to worke in compaſſion towards them; yet as it were, remembring the provocation of this *Manaſſeh*, he recals his thoughts of mercy, 2 *Kings* 23. 26, 27. The diſpoſing of divine and humane things, is oftentimes very oppoſite. God himſelfe proceeds with them in a diverſe diſpenſation: In the ſpirituall body the *members* offend and the *head* is puniſhed: *The iniquity of us all did meet on him*, *Iſa.* 53. In the civill politick body, the *head* offends and the *members* rue it; *Manaſſeh* ſins, and *Judah* muſt goe Captive.

Eſt quædam æmulatio divinæ rei, & humanæ, *Tertul. Ap.*

Three things preſent themſelves for the Vindication of the

equity

equity of Gods righteous judgments, in the recompencing the sins of the King upon the people.

1. The *Concurrence and Influence* of the Peoples power into their Rule and Government: They that set him up, may justly be called to answer for his miscarriage. The Lord himselfe had before made the sole bottom of that *Politicall Administration* to be their owne wills: *If thou wilt have a King after the manner of the Nation*, Deut. 17. 14. 1 Sam. 8. 7. though for particulars, himselfe (according to his supreame soveraignty) placed in *many*, by peculiar exemption, otherwise his providence was served by their plenary consent, or by such dispensation of things as you have related, 1 *Kings* 16. 21, 22. *Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts, halfe of the people followed Tibni the sonne of Ginath to make him King, and halfe followed Omri: but the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni; so Tibni dyed, and Omri reigned.* Now they, who place men in authority to be *Gods Vicegerents* doe undertake to God for their deportment in that authority, and therefore may justly beare the sad effects of their sinfull miscarriages.

2 Because for feare *of* Manasse's *cruelty*, or to flatter him in his tyranny for their owne advantage, the greatest part of the people had *apostatized* from the wayes and worship of *Hezekiah*, to comply with him in his sinne. As at another time *they willingly walked after the Commandement*, Hos. 5. 11. And this is plainly expreft, 2 *Kings* 21. 9. Manasseh *seduced the people to doe more evil then the Nations*. When Kings turne seducers, they seldome want good store of followers: Now *if the blinde leade the blinde, both will*, and both justly may *fall into the ditch*. When Kings command unrighteous things, and people suite them with willing complyance, none doubts, but the destruction of them both is just and righteous. See *vers.* 6. of this Chapter.

3. Because the people by vertue of their retained soveraignty, did not restraine him in his provoking wayes. So *Zwinglius*, *Artic.* 42. *Qui non vetat, cum potest, jubet*: When *Saul* would have put *Jonathan* to death, the people would not suffer him so to doe, but delivered *Jonathan* that he dyed not,

1 *Sam.*

1 Sam. 14. When *David* purposed the reducing of the Arke, his speech to the people was; *If it please you, let us send abroad to our brethren every where, that they may assemble themselves to us, and all the Congregation said that they would doe so, because the thing was right in their eyes*, 2 Chron. 13. 2. So they bargaine with *Rehoboam* about their *subjection*, upon condition of a moderate *Rule*, 1 *Kings* 12. By vertue of which power also they delivered *Jeremiah* from the Prophets and Priests that would have put him to death, *Ier.* 26. 16. And on this ground might justly feed on the fruit of their own neglected duty. See *Bilson* of Obed. *part* 3. *page* 271.

Be it thus, or otherwise, by what way soever the people had their *Interest* therein; certaine it is, that for the sinnes of *Manasseh*, one way or other, made their owne, they were destroyed: And therefore these things being written for our example, it cannot but be of great concernment to us, to know what were those sinnes which wraps up the people of God in irrevocable destruction: Now these the holy Ghost fully manifesteth in the story of the life and reign of this *Manasseh*, and they may all be reduced unto 2. chiefe heads.

1. False worship or superstition: *He built high places, made Altars for* Baal, *and a Grove as did* Ahab, 2 *Kings* 25. 2.

2. Cruelty: *Hee shedde innocent blood very much, till hee had filled Jerusalem with blood from one end of it to another*, vers. 16.

Whether this *cruelty* be to be ascribed to his *Tyranny* in civill affaires, and so the blood shed, is called *innocent*, because not of Malefactors, or to his *persecution*, in subordination to his *false worship* instituted as before (as the Pope and his Adherents have devoured whole Nations *in ordine ad spiritualia*) is not apparent: but this is from hence and other places most evident; That *superstition and persecution, will-worship and tyranny are miserapeble concomitants.*

See the Appendix at the end of this Sermon.

Nebuchadnezzar sets up his great Image, and the next news you heare, *the Saints are in the furnace*, Dan. 3. 20. You seldome see a fabricke of *humane invented worship*, but either the foundation or top-stone is laid in the blood of Gods people. *The wisdome* (Religion, or way of worship) *that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be entreated, full of*

mercy

mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisie, James 3. 17. when the other is *earthly, sensuall, devillish, bringing along envying, strife, contention, and every evill worke,* vers. 16. Persecution and blood is the genuine product of all invented worship. I might from hence name, and pursue other *Observations*, but I shall only name one, and proceed.

When false worship with injustice by cruelty have possessed the Governours of a Nation, and wrapt in the consent of the greatest part of the people; who have been acquainted with the mind of God, that People and Nation without unprecidented mercy is obnoxious to remediless ruine. Obser.

Those two are the *Bell* and *Dragon*, that what by their actings, what by their deservings, have swallowed that Ocean of blood which hath flowed from the veines of millions of millions slaine upon the face of the earth. Give me the number of *the witnesses of Jesus*, whose soules under the Altar cry for revenge against their false worshipping murtherers, and the Tale of them, whole lives have been sacrificed to the insatiable *Ambition* and *Tyranny* of blood-thirsty Potentates, with the issues of Gods just vengeance on the sons of men, for complyance in these two things, and you will have gathered in the whole *Harvest of blood*, leaving but a few straggling gleanings upon other occasions. And if these things have been found in *England*, and the present administration with sincere humiliation, doe not runne crosse to *unravell this close woven webb* of destruction, all thoughts of recovery will quickly be too late. And thus far, sinne and providrnce drive on a parallel. Rev. 6. 9, 10.

3. The inevitableness of the desolation threatned, and the inexorableness of God in the execution of it, v. 1. is the third thing considerable: *Though* Moses *and* Samuel *stood before mee, yet my minde could not be toward this people.*

Should I insist upon this, it would draw me out unto Scripture evidencer, of a Nations *travaelling in sinne*, beyond the line of Gods patience, and so not to be exempted from ruine: but instead thereof I shall make it a part of my daily supplications, that they may be to our *enemies*, if *Gods* enemies, and the interpretation of them to those that hate us.

In:

In briefe, the words containe an impoſſible *ſuppoſition*, and yet a *Negation* of the thing for whoſe ſake it is ſuppoſed: *Moſes* and *Samuel* were men, who in the dayes of their fleſh offered up ſtrong ſupplications, and averted many imminent judgements from a ſinfull people; As if the Lord ſhould ſay, All that I can doe in ſuch a caſe as this, I would grant at the interceſſion of *Moſes* and *Samuel*, or others interceding in their ſpirit and zeale; but now the ſtate of things is come to that paſſe, the time of Treaty being expired, the black flagge hung out, and the *decree having brought forth*, Zeph. 2. 2. that upon their utmoſt intreaty it cannot, it ſhall not be reverſed.

Obſerv. *There is a time when ſin growes ripe for ruine; For three tranſgreſſions and for foure the Lord will not turne away the iniquity of a people*, Amos 1. 9. When the *ſinne of the Amorites* hath *filled* the cup of vengeance, they muſt drinke it, *Gen.* 15. 16. *England* under ſeverall Adminiſtrations of civill Government, hath fallen *twice*, yea *thrice* into Nation-deſtroying ſinnes; Providence hath once more given it another bottome; If you ſhould ſtumble (which the Lord avert) at the ſame blocke of impiety and cruelty, there is not another fitting to be made to reſerve any graines from the ground; I doubt not but our three tranſgreſſions and foure will end in totall deſolation, the Lord be your guide, poor *England* lyeth at ſtake.

Obſerv. *The greateſt difficulty that lyeth in bringing of totall deſtruction upon a ſinfull people is in the interpoſition of* Moſes *and* Samuel; If *Moſes* would but have ſtood out of the gap, and let the *Almighty* goe, he had broken in upon the whole Hoſt of *Iſrael*, Exo. 32. 9, 10. And let it by the way be obſerved of the ſpirit of *Samuel*, that when the people of God were moſt exorbitant, he cryeth, *as for me, God forbid that I ſhould ſinne againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you*, 1 Sam. 12. 23. Scarce anſwered by thoſe, who if their *intereſt* be not *ſerved*, or at beſt, their *reaſon ſatisfied*, will ſcarce yield a *prayer* for, yea powre out *curſes* againſt their choiſeſt Deliverers: The Lord lay it not to their charge; For us ſeeing that *praying Deliverers are more prevalent then fighting Deliverers* (it is though *Moſes* and *Samuel*, not *Gideon* and *Sampſon*, ſtood before me) as ſome decay,

let

let us gather ſtrength in the Lord, that *hee may have never the more reſt* for their giving over, *untill hee eſtabliſh mount Zyon a praiſe in the earth.*

4. Come we now to the fourth thing in this Chapter; the *Prophets* ſtate and condition with the frame and deportment of his heart and ſpirit under theſe diſpenſations, and here we find him expreſſing two things of himſelfe.

1. *What he found from others*, v. 10.

2. *What hee wreſtled withall in his owne ſpirit*, v. 15, 16, 17, 18.

1. What he found from others, he telleth you, it was *curſing and reproach*, &c. *I have neither lent on uſury, nor have men lent to me on uſury, yet every one of them doth curſe me*, v. 10.

Now this returne may be conſidered two wayes.

1. *In it ſelfe, Every one* (ſaith he) *of this people curſe me.*

2. *In reference to his deportment: I have neither borrowed nor lent on uſury yet they curſe me.*

From the Firſt, Obſerve:

Inſtruments of Gods greateſt workes and glory, are often times the chiefeſt objects of a profeſſing peoples curſes and revenges. The returne which Gods Labourers meet withall in this Generation, is in the number of thoſe things, whereof there is *none new under the Sun.* Men, that under God, deliver a Kingdom, may have the Kingdoms curſes for their paines. *Obſ.*

When *Moſes* had brought the people of *Iſrael* out of Bondage, by that wonderfull and unparallel'd deliverance, being forced to appeare with the Lord for the deſtruction of *Corah* and his *Aſſociates*, who would have ſeduced the *Congregation* to its utter ruine, he receives at length this reward of all his travell, labour and paines, *All the Congregation gathered themſelves againſt him and Aaron, laying murther and ſedition to their charge, telling them they had killed the people of the Lord*, Numb. 16. 41, 42. A goodly reward for all their travels: If Gods workes doe not ſuite with the *luſts*, *prejudices*, and *intereſts* of men, they will labour to give his inſtruments the *Devills* wayes. Let not upright hearts ſink, becauſe they meet with thankleſſe men, *Bona agere, & mala pati Chriſtianorum eſt.* A man may have the *bleſſing* of God, and the *curſe* of a profeſſing

people at the same time. *Behold I and the Children whom God hath given me, are for signes and for wonders in Israel, Isa.8.15.*

Tert. Apol. *Cum ab hominibus damnamur, à Deo absolvimur:* Mans *condemnation* and Gods *absolution*, doe not seldome meet upon the same persons, for the same things: If you labour to doe the *works* of the Lord, pray think it not strange, if among men, *curses* be your reward and detestation your wages.

2. *In reference to the Prophets deportment, he had neither lent nor had any lent to him upon usury*; he was free from blame among them, had no dealings with them, in those things which are usually attended with reproaches, as he shews by an instance in Usury, a thing that a long time hath *heard very ill.*

Obs. *Men every way blameless and to be embraced in their owne wayes are oftentimes abhorred and laden with curses, for following the Lord in his wayes. Bonus vir Cajus sejus, sed malus quia Christianus*; What precious men should many be, would they let goe the work of God in this Generation? No advantage against them, but in the matter of their God, and that is enough to have them to the *Lyons, Dan.* 6. 5. He that might be honoured for compassing the *ends* suiting his owne Worldly *Interest*, and will cheerefully undergoe dishonour for going beyond, to suit the designe of God, hath surely some *impression* upon his spirit, that is from above.

2. You have the Prophets deportment, and the frame of his spirit during those Transactions between the Lord and that sinfull people: And this he holds out in many pathetical complaints, to be *fainting, decaying, perplexed, weary of his burden*, not knowing how to ease himselfe, as you may see at large, *v.* 15, 16, 17, 18.

Obs. *In darke and difficult dispensations of Providence, Gods choisest servants are oftentimes ready to faint under the burthen of them.* How weary was *David* when he cryed out in such a condition, *O that I had wings like a Dove, for then would I flie away and be at rest*, *Psal.* 55. 6. Long had he waited for a desired *issue* of his perplexed state, and had perhaps often times been frustrated of his *hope* of drawing to a period of his miseries, and now finding one *disappointment* to follow on the neck of another,

another, he is weary and cries, What nothing, but this trouble and confusion still? *Oh that I had wings like a Dove*, a Ship to saile to a forraigne Nation (or the like) there to be at peace. In the like strait another time, see what a miserable conclusion he draws, of all his being exercised under the hand of God, *Psal.* 73. 13. *Verily I have clensed my heart in VAINE, and washed my hands in innocency*; And againe, *Psal.* 116. 11. He saith in the perturbation of his mind, *All men are lyars*: That all the promises, all the encouragements, which in his way he had received from God should faile of their accomplishment.

It is not with *them*, as it was with that *wicked King* of *Israel*, who being disappointed of peace and deliverance in his owne time, crys out, *This evill is of the Lord, why should I waite upon him any longer*, 2 *Kings* 16. 33. The *season* of deliverance suited not his *expectation*; therefore he quite throweth off the Lord and his protection. Not unlike many among our selves, whose desires and expectations being not satisfied in the *closing* of our distractions, according to the way, which themselves had framed for the Lord to walke in, are ready to cast off his *cause*, his protection to comply with the enemies of his Name, *Si Deus homini non placuerit, Deus non erit*: But it may be observed, that deliverance came not to that people untill *Jehoram* was weary of waiting, and then instantly God gives it in; when God hath tyred the *patience* of corrupted men, he will speak *peace* to them, that wait for him.

Thus is it not with the Saints of God, onely being *perplexed* in their spirits, *darke* in their apprehensions, and *fainting* in their strength, they breake out oft times into passionate complaints (as *Jeremy* for a Cottage in the Wilderneſſe) but yet for the maine holding firme to the Lord: and the reasons of this quailing are:

1. *The weakneſſe of Faith, when the methods of God's proceedings are unfathomable to our apprehensions*; while men see the paths wherein the Lord walketh, they can follow him through some difficulties; but when that is hid from them, though Providence so shut up all other wayes, that it is impossible God should be in them, yet if they cannot discerne (*so proud*

are they) how he goeth in that wherein he is, they are ready to faint and give over. God is pleased sometime to make darkenesse his pavilion and his secret place, *A fire devoures before him, and it is very tempestuous round about him*, *Psal.* 50. 3. When once God is attended with fire, darkenesse, and tempest, because we cannot so easily see him, we are ready to leave him: Now this the Lord usually doth in the execution of his judgements, *Thy righteousnesse is like the great Mountaines, thy judgements are a great deep*, *Psal.* 36. 6. His *righteousnesse*, his kindnesse is like a great *Mountaine*, that is easie to be seen, a man cannot overlooke it, unlesse he wilfully shut his eyes; *But his Judgements are like the great Deepe*; Who can look into the bottome of the *Sea*, or know what is done in the depths thereof? Gods works in their *accomplishment* are oftentimes so unsuited to the reasons and apprehensions of men, that very many who have been strong in desires, and great in expectation of them, upon their bringing forth to light, have quite rejected and opposed them as none of his, because distant from what they had framed to themselves: It is evident from the Gospel, that the people of the *Jewes* were full of expectation and longing for the great work of the comming of the *Messias*, just at the season wherein he came, yet being come, because not *accommodated* to their *præ-imaginations*, they rejected him, *as having neither forme nor comelinesse in him to be desired*, *Isa.* 53. 2. And the Prophet *Amos* telleth many, *Who desired the day of the Lord, that, that day should be darkenesse to them and not light*, *Amos* 5. 18, 20. So in every Generation many desirers of the accomplishment of Gods work, are shaken off from any share therein, by finding it unsuited to their reasons and expectations.

Now when the Lord is pleased thus to *walke in darkenesse*, many being not able to *trace* him in his dispensations, are ready to lye downe and sink under the burden: *David* seemes to professe, that he had nothing at such a time to uphold him but this, that God must be there, or no where; *I had said* (saith he) *that it was in vaine to walke as I doe, but that I should have condemned the generation of thy Children*, *Psal.* 73. 15. And truely God never leaves us without so much *light*, but

that

that we may see clearly *where he is not*, and so by recounting particulars we may be rolled *where he is*, though his goings there be not so clear. Aske if God be in the Counsels of men, who seek themselves, and in the ways of those who make it their designe to ruine the Generation of the just. If you finde him there, seek no further; if not, let that give you *light*, to discerne, *where hee makes his abode, that you turne not aside to the flocks of Others.*

2. A reducing the works of Providence to inbred Rules of our owne. But this I cannot pursue.

Use. *Be tender toward Fainters in difficult seasons*; if they *leave waiting on the Lord, because the evill is of him*, if they *cast in their Lot with the portion of the ungodly*, they will in the end perish *in their Gainsaying*: But as for *such*, as what for want of *light*, what for want of *faith*, sit downe and sigh in darknesse, be not too hasty in laying further *burdens* on them: When first the *Confederacy* was entred into, by the *Protestant* Princes in *Germany* against *Charles* the *fift*, *Luther* himselfe for a season was bewildred, and knew not what to doe, untill being instructed in the fundamentall Laws of the Empire, he sate downe fully in that undertaking, though the Lord gave it not the desired issue, *Sleid. Com. Lib.* 8. Our Saviour Christ askes, *If when he comes, hee shall finde faith on the earth*, *Luke* 18. 8. It is his comming with the *spirit of judgement and burning*, a day of Tryall and Visitation, he there speaks of: Now what Faith shall he want, which will not be found in that day? Not the Faith of *adherence* to himselfe for spirituall life and justification, but of *actuall closing* with him in the things he then doth; that shall be rare, many shall be staggered, and faint in that day.

And thus by the severall Heads of this Chapter, have I led you through the very state and condition of this Nation at this Time.

First, *Variety of judgements* are threatned to us, and incumbent on us, as in the first part. Secondly, of these, *False worship*, *Superstition*, *Tyranny*, *and Cruelty* lye in the bottome as their procuring causes, which is the second. Thirdly, These *if renewed under your hand*, will certainely bring inevitable ruine

ruine upon the whole Nation, which is the third. Fourthly, *All which, make many precious Hearts, what for want of light, what for want of Faith, to faile, and cry out,* for the wings of a Dove, which is the fourth. I come in the fift place to Gods direction to you for the future, in this ſtate and condition, which being ſpread in diverſe Verſes as the Lord gives it to the Prophet, I ſhall meddle with no more of it, then is contained in the words, which at our entrance I read unto you.

Let them returne, &c.

In the words obſerve foure things,

1. Gods *direction* to the Prophet, and in him, to all, that doe his worke in ſuch a ſeaſon, as this deſcribed: *Let them returne to thee, returne not thou to them.*

2. Their aſſiſtance and ſupportment in purſuance of that direction: *I will make thee, to this people, a brazen fenced wall.*

3. The oppoſition, with its ſucceſſe and iſſue, which in that way, they ſhould meet withall: *They ſhall fight againſt thee, and ſhall not prevaile.*

4. Their Conſolation and ſucceſſe from the preſence of the Lord: *For I am with thee to deliver thee, &c.*

1. There is Gods direction,

Many difficulties in this troubleſome ſeaſon, was the *Prophet* intricated withall: The *people* would not be *prevailed* with, to come up to the mind of God, they continuing in their *ſtubbornneſſe*, the Lord would not be *prevailed* with, to avert the threatned Deſolation; what now ſhall he doe? To ſtand out againſt the *bulke of the people* ſuits not his earthly Intereſt; to couple with them, anſwers not the diſcharge of his Office; to wait upon them any longer, is fruitleſſe; to give up himſelfe to their ways comfortleſſe: Hence his complaints, hence his moanings. Better lye downe and ſink under the burden, then always to ſwim againſt the ſtreame of an unreformable multitude: In this ſtrait, the Lord comes in with his direction, *Let them returne unto thee,* &c. Keep thy ſtation, performe thy duty, comply not with the *Children of Backſliding*. But what ever be the *iſſue*, if there be any *cloſing* wrought, let it be, by working them off from their wayes of Folly. *All condeſcention* on thy part, where the worke of God is to be done

done is in opposition to him; If they *Return*, embrace them freely; if not, doe thy *duty constantly*.

That which is spoken immediately to the Prophet, I shall hold out to All, Acting in the name and Authority of God, in this generall Proposition.

Plausible complyances of men in Authority, with those, against whom they are employed, are Treacherous contrivances against the God of Heaven, by whom they are employed. Obs.

If God be so provoked, that he curseth him, *who doth his worke negligently*, what is he by them that do it Treacherously? when he gives a *sword* into the hands of men, and they thrust it into his owne *Bowels*, his Glory and Honour, those things so deare to him? He that is intrusted with it, and dares not doe *Justice* on every one, that dares doe *Injustice*, is affraid of the creature, but makes very bold with the Creator.

Prov. 25. 2. *It is the glory of God to conceale a thing, but it is the glory of a King to finde out a matter*: That which God aimeth to be *glorious* in, to manifest his *Attributes* by, is *the concealing and covering our Iniquities* in Christ; but if the *Magistrate* will have glory, if he will not bring upon himselfe *Dishonour* by dishonouring of God, he is to search and finde out the *Transgressions*, with whose Cognizance he is entrusted, and to give unto them condigne Retribution. If the Lord curse them, *who come not forth to his helpe against the mighty*, Judg. 5. 23. What is their due, who being called forth by him, doe yet *helpe the mighty against him?* For a man to take part with the *Kingdomes Enemies* is no small crime; but for a *Commission-Officer* to runne from them by whom he is *Commissionated*, to take part with the Adversary, is death without mercy: yet have not some in our dayes arrived at that stupendious *Impudence*, that when as private persons they have declaimed against the *Enemies* of the Nation, and by that means got themselves into *Authority*, they have made use of that *Authority* to comply with, and uphold those, by an *Opposition* to whom, they got into their Authority? which is no lesse then an *Atheisticall* attempt to personate the Almighty, unto such Iniquities as without his Appearance, they dare not owne: But *he that justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the Just, are both*

an

an Abhomination to the Lord, Prov. 17. 15. and not only to the Lord, but to good men alſo; *He that ſaith to the wicked, thou art Righteous, him ſhall the people curſe, Nations ſhall abhor him*, Prov. 24. 24.

I ſpeake only as to the Generall (for mee let all particulers find mercy) with *a ſad Remembrance* of the late workings of things amongſt us, with thoſe vile ſordid *compliances* which grew upon the ſpirits of *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters* with thoſe, whoſe Garments were died with the blood of Gods Saints and precious ones (as formerly they were called, for now theſe Names are become termes of reproach) and would this *complying* went alone, but Pretences and Accuſations muſt be found out againſt ſuch as fellow with them, when they begin to call *darkeneſſe light*, they will ere long call *light darkneſs*: by which meanes, our eyes have ſeen, men of their owne accord laying down the *weapons* werewith at firſt they fought againſt Oppoſers, and taking up *them*, which were uſed againſt themſelves, as hath happened more then once, to *Pen-men* both in our own, and our neighbour Nation. Now this Revolting from principles of Religion and Righteouſneſſe, to a complyance with any ſinfull way or perſon, is a Treacherous Oppoſition to the God of Heaven; for,

1. It cannot be done but by preferring the *creature* before the *Creator*, eſpecially in thoſe things which are the proximate cauſes of Deviation.

Two principall cauſes I have obſerved of this crooked walking.

1. Feare.

2. That Deſire of periſhing things, which hath a mixture of *Covetouſneſſe* and *Ambition*. The firſt maketh men *wary*, what they doe againſt men, the other maketh them *weary* of doing any thing for God, as whereby their ſordid ends are not like to be accompliſhed.

1. Feare: when once Magiſtrates begin to liſten after *quid ſequitur's*, and ſo to with-draw from *doing good*, for *Feare* of ſuffering *evill*, paths of wickedneſs are quickly returned unto, and the authority of God deſpiſed. *Let this man goe, and take heed of Cæſar*, John 19. 12. did more prevaile on *Pilat's* treacherous

cherous heart, then all the other clamours of the *Jewes*; yea, was not the whole *Sanedrim* swayed to desperate villany, *for feare the Romans should come and take away their Kingdome?* John 11. 48. When men begin once to distrust that God will leave them in the bryars, to wrestle it out themselves (for unbelieſe lyeth at the bottome of carnall feare) they quickely turne themselves to *contrivances* of their owne, for their owne *safety*, their owne *prosperity*, which commonly is by *obliging* those unto them by *compliances*, in an opposition to whom they might *oblige* the Almighty to their assistance: surely they conclude hee wants either *Truth* or *Power* to support them in his employment.

If a *Prince* should send an Embassadour to a *Forreigne* State to treat about Peace, or to denounce War; who, when hee comes there, distrusting his Masters *Power* to make good his undertaking, should *comply* and winde up his *Interest* with them to whom he was sent, suffering his Soveraigns errant to fall to the ground, would hee not be esteemed as arrant a Traitor as ever lived? And yet though this be *clipt coine* among men, it is put upon the Lord every day as currant.

From this principle of carnall feare and unbelief, *trembling for a man that shall dye, and the Son of man that shall be as grasse, forgetting the Lord our maker*, Isa. 51. 12. are all those *prudential follies*, which exercise the mindes of most men in authority, making them, especially in times of difficulties, to regulate and square all their proceedings, by what suites their owne safety and particular intereſts, counselling, advising, working for themselves, quite forgetting by whom they are entrusted, and whose businesse they should doe.

2. A desire of perishing things tempered with covetousnes and ambition: Hence was the sparing of the fat Cattell, and of *Agag* by *Saul*, 1 Sam. 15. When those two *qualifications* close on any, they are diametrally opposed to that frame which of God is required in them, *viz. That they should be men fearing God, and hating covetousnesse*: The *first* will goe far, being only a contrivance for safety; but if this *latter* take hold of any, being a consultation to *exalt* themselves, it quickly carryeth them beyond all bounds whatsoever. The Lord grant,

that hereafter there may be no such complaints in this Nation, or may be causeleſſe, as have been heretofore, *viz.* That wee have powred out our *prayers*, jeoparded our *lives*, wasted our *eſtates*, ſpent our *blood*, to ſerve the *luſts* and compaſſe the deſigns of ambitious ungodly men.

The many wayes whereby theſe things intrench upon the ſpirits of men, to byaſſe them from the paths of the Lord, I ſhall not inſiſt upon, it is enough that I have touched upon the obvious cauſes of deviation, and manifeſted them to be treacheries againſt the God of all Authority.

Vſe. Be exhorted to beware of *Relapſes*, with all their cauſes and inducements, and to be conſtant to the way of *Righteouſneſſe*, and this I ſhall hold out unto you in two particulars.

1. Labour to recover others, even all that were ever diſtinguiſhed and called by the name of the Lord, from their late fearfull *Returning* to ſinfull *Complyances* with the Enemies of God and the Nation: I ſpeak not of mens *Perſons*, but of their *wayes*; For 3. yeares this people have been eminently *ſicke* of the folly of *Backeſliding*, and without ſome *ſpeciall Cordiall* are like to periſh in it, as farre as I know.

Looke upon the *eſtate* of this People as they were differenced ſeaven yeares agoe, ſo for ſome continuance, and as they are *now*, and you ſhall find in how many things we have *returned* to others, and not one inſtance to be given of their returne to us; that this may be clear take ſome particulars.

1. In *Words and Expreſſions*, thoſe are *index animi*; turne them over and you may find what is in the whole Heart. *Out of the Aboundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* Now is not that *Language*, are not thoſe very *Expreſſions*, which filled the mouths of the common Adverſaries onely, grown alſo terms of *Reproach* upon the Tongues of men, that ſuffered ſometimes under them, and counted it their honour ſo to do? Hence that common *Exprobation*, A Parliament of *Saints*, an Army of *Saints*, and ſuch like Deciſions of Gods ways, now plentifull with them, *who ſate ſometimes, and tooke ſweete counſell with us*: Ah! had it not been more for *the Honour* of God, that we had kept our ſtation, untill others had come to us, ſo to have exalted the name and profeſſion of the *Goſpel*, then

that

that we should so return to them, as to joyne with them in making the paths of Christ a Reproach? *Had it not beene better for us with Judah to continue Ruling with God, & to be faithfull with the Saints*, Hos. 11. 12. *then to stand in the Congregation of the mockers, and to sit in the seate of the scornefull?* What shall we say when the Saints of God *are as signes and wonders to be spoken against in Israel?* Isa. 8. 18. Oh that men would remember how they have *left* their first *station*; when themselves use those *Reproaches* unto others, which for the same cause themselves formerly bare with comfort! It is bitternesse to consider how the Gospel is scandalized by this wofull *Returne* of Ministers and People, by casting *Scripturall Expressions* by way of scorn, on those, with whom they were sometimes in the like kind Companions of Contempt. Surely in this we are *Returned* to them, and not they to us.

2. In Actions and those,

1. Of *Religion*, not only in *Opinion*, but *Practise* also, are we here under a vile *Returne*. We are become the *Lyons*, and the very same thoughts entertained by us, against others, as were exercised towards our selves. Are not others as unworthy to live upon their native soile in *our judgements*, as we our selves in *the judgements* of them formerly over us? Are not *groanes* for *liberty*, by the warmth of favour, in a few yeares hatched into *Attempts* for *Tyranny*? and for *Practise*, what hold hath former superstition in observing *dayes* and *times*, laid hold upon *the many of the People* again, witnesse the late solemn superstition, and many things of the like nature.

2. For *Civill things*, the closing of so many, formerly otherwise engaged, with the adverse party in the late *Rebellion*, with the luke-warm deportment of others at the same time, is a sufficient demonstration of it; And may not the Lord justly complain of all this, *what iniquity have you seene in mee, or my wayes, that you are gone farre from me, and walked after vanity, and are become vaine*, Jer. 2. 4. *Why have you changed your glory for that which doth not profit*, vers. 11. *Have I beene a dry heath, or a barren wildernesse to you?* Oh that men should find no more sweetnes in following the *Lambe* under wonderfull protections, but that they should thus turne aside into every Wilder-

neſſe : What *Indignity* is this to the wayes of God? I could give you many *Reaſons* of it; but I have done, what I intended, a little hinted, that wee are a *Returning People*, that ſo you might be exhorted to help for a Recovery: and how ſhall that be?

2. By your owne *keeping cloſe* to the Paths of Righteouſneſſe; if you *Returne* not, others will look about again: This Breach, this evill is of you, within your own walls, was the fountaine of our *Backeſliding*. Would you be the *Repairers of Breaches, the Reſtorers of Paths* for men to walke in, doe theſe two things.

1. *Turne* not to the wayes of ſuch, as the Lord hath blaſted under your eyes, and theſe may be referred to 3. heads.

1. *Oppreſſion.*
2. *Selfe-ſeeking.*
3. *Contrivances for perſecution.*

1. *Oppreſſion*, how deteſtable a crime it is in the eyes of the Almighty, what effects it hath upon men, *making wiſe men madde*, Eccl. 7. 7. How frequently it cloſeth in the calamitous Ruine of the Oppreſſours themſelves, are things known to all. Whether it hath not been exerciſed in this Nation, both in *Generall* by unneceſſary Impoſitions, and in *Particular* by unwarrantable preſſures, let the mournfull *cryes* of all ſorts of People teſtifie. Should you now *Return* to ſuch wayes as theſe, would not the Anger of the Lord ſmoake againſt you? Make it I beſeech you your *Deſigne* to relieve the whole, by all meanes poſſible, and to relieve Particulars, yea even of the *adverſe Party* where too much overborn. Oh let it be conſidered *by you*, that it be not conſidered *upon you*. I know the things you are neceſſitated to, are not to be ſupported by the aire. It is only what is *unneceſſary* as to you, or *inſupportable* as to othes, that requires your ſpeedy Reforming; that ſo it may be ſaid of you as of *Nehemiah*, Chap. 5. 14, 15. And for *Particulars* (pray pardon my folly and boldneſs) I heartily deſire a Committee of your Honourable Houſe might ſit once a week, to relieve poor men that have been oppreſſed by men, ſometimes enjoying Parliamentary Authority.

2. *Selfe-ſeeking*, when men can be content to lay a *Nation low*,

low, that they may *set up* themselves upon the heapes and ruines thereof. Have not some sought to advance themselves under that power, which with the lives and blood of the People they have opposed? Seeming to be *troubled* at former things, not because they were *done*, but because they were not *done by them*. But *innocent blood* will be found a Tottering foundation for men to build their Honours, Greatnesse, and Preferments upon. O *returne* not in this unto any. If men *serve themselves* of the Nation, they must expect that the Nation will *serve it selfe* upon them. The best security you can possibly have that the *People* will performe their duty in obedience, is the witnesse of your own consciences, that you have discharged *your duty* towards them, in seeking *their good*, *by your owne trouble*, and not *your owne advantages* in their trouble. I doubt not but that in this, your practice makes the admonition a commendation, otherwise the word spoken, will certainly witnesse against you.

3. *Contrivances for persecution*, how were the hearts of all men hardned like the nether Mill-stone, and their thoughts did grinde blood and revenge against their Brethren! What colours, what pretences had men invented to prepare a way for the *Rolling of their garments in the teares*: yea blood of Christians. The Lord so keep your spirits from a compliance herein, that with all the Bowe be not too much bent on the other side, which is not impossible.

Be there a Backsliding upon your spirit to these, or such like things as these, the Lord will walke contrary to you, and *were you as the Signet upon his hand*, he would pluck you off.

2. *Returne not to the open enemies of our peace*: I could here inlarge my selfe to support your spirits in the work mentioned, *Job* 29. 14, 15. but I must on to the following parts of my Text, and passe from the *Direction* given, to the *Supportment*, and Assistance promised. *I will make thee to this people a brazen and a fenced Wall.*

An implyed *Objection*, which the Prophet might put in, upon his charge to keep so close to the rule of righteousnesse, is here removed. If I must thus abide by it, to execute whatsoever

ſoever the Lord cals me out unto, not ſhrinking, nor ſtaggering at the greateſt undertakings, what will become of me in the iſſue? Will it not be deſtructive to ſtand out againſt a confirmed People? No, ſaith the Lord, it ſhall not be: *I will make thee, &c.*

Obſ. *God will certainly give in prevailing ſtrength, and unconquerable defence unto Perſons conſtantly diſcharging the duties of Righteouſneſſe, eſpecially when undertaken in times of difficulty and oppoſition.* *I will make thee*, &c. The like engagement to this you have, made to *Ezekiel*, *Chap.* 3. 8, 9. Neither was it ſo to the *Prophets* alone, but to *Magiſtrates* alſo when *Joſhua* undertook the Regency of *Iſrael* in a difficult time, he takes of his feare and *Diffidence* with this very incouragement, *Joſh.* 1. 5. He ſaith he will make them a *Wall*, the beſt defence againſt oppoſition, and that not a weake *tottering Wall*, that might eaſily be caſt downe, but a *brazen wall*, that muſt needs be impregnable: What Engines can poſſibly prevaile againſt a Wall of *Braſſe*? And to make it more ſecure, this *brazen wall* ſhall be *fenced* with all manner of fortificatione, and ammunition; ſo that the veriеſt Coward in the World, being behind ſuch a *wall*, may without dread or terrour apply himſelfe to that, which he findeth to doe. God will ſo *ſecure* the Inſtruments of his glory againſt a *Backeſlyding people* in holding up the wayes of his Truth and Righteouſneſſe, that all *Attempts* againſt them ſhall be vaine, and the moſt timorous ſpirit may be ſecure, Provided he goe not out of the Lords way; for if they be found beyond the *Line*, the *brazen wall*, they may eaſily be ſurprized. And indeed, who but a *Foole* would run from the ſhelter of a *brazen wall*, to hide himſelfe in a *little ſtubble*? And yet ſo doe all who runne to their owne wiſedome, from the moſt hazardous engagement that any of the wayes of God can poſſibly lead them unto. It is a ſure word, and for ever to be reſted upon, which the Lord gives in to *Aſa*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. *The Lord is with you, while yee be with him:* An *unbiaſed Magiſtracy*, ſhall never want Gods continued preſence: Very *Jeroboam* himſelfe receives a promiſe upon condition of cloſe walking with God in righteous adminiſtrations, of having *an houſe built him like the houſe of David*,

David, 1 *Kings* 11.38. What a wall was God to *Moses* in that great undertaking of being instrumentall for the delivery of *Israel* from a bondage and slavery of foure hundred yeares continuance: *Pharoah* was against him whom he had deprived of his *Soveraignty* and dominion over the People: and what a provocation the *depriving of Soveraignty* is unto Potentates, needs no demonstration: To the *corruption* of nature which inclines to *Heights* and exaltations, in imitation of the fountaine whence it flowes; they have also the *corruption* of state and condition, which hath alwayes enclined to Absoluteness and Tyranny: All *Egypt* was against him, as being by him visibly destroyed, wasted, spoyled, robbed, and at length smitten in *the Apple of the eye*, by the losse of their first borne; and if this be not enough, that the *King* and People, whom he opposed were his enemies, the very People, for whose sakes he set himsele to oppose the others, they also rise up against him, yea seek to destroy him; one time they *appeale to God for Justice against him*, *Exod.* 5.21. *The Lord looke upon you and judge.* They appeale to the righteous God to witnesse, that he had not fulfilled what he promised them, to wit, Liberty, Safety, and freedome from oppression, but that rather by his meanes their Burdens were encreased: And in this they were so confident (like some amongst us) that they *appealed* unto God for the equity of their complaints. Afterward being reduced to a *strait*, such as they could not see how possibly they should be *extricated* from, without utter *ruine* (like our present condition in the apprehension of some) they cry out upon him for the whole designe of bringing them into the Wilderneste, and affirme positively, that though they had perished in their former slavery, it had been better for them, then to have followed him in this new and dangerous engagement, *Ex.* 14.11,12,13. That *Generation* being (as *Calvin* observes) so inured to *bondage*, that they were altogether unfit to beare with the *workings* and pangs of their *approaching Liberty*. Afterwards, doe they want drink? *Moses* is the cause; did they want meate? this *Moses* would starve them, *Exod.* 15.24. and 16.7. He could not let them alone by the Flesh-pots of *Egypt*, for this they are ready to stone him,

Calv. in Num. Cap. 4.

Exod.

Exod. 17. 3. At this day, have we too much *Raine*, or too short a *Harveſt*, it is laid on the ſhoulders of the preſent Government. It was no otherwiſe of old. At length this People came to that height, as being frightened by the oppoſition, they heard of, and framed to themſelves in that place whether *Moſes* would carry them, that they preſently enter into a *conſpiracy* and *revolt*, conſulting to caſt off his Government, and choſe new Commanders, and with a violent hand to *returne* to their former condition, *Numb.* 14. 4. an *attempt* as frequent at ſruitleſſe among our ſelves. When this would not doe, at length upon the occaſion of taking off *Corah* and his company, they aſſemble themſelves together, and lay (not impriſonment but) *murder* to his charge, and *that of the people of the Lord*, *Numb.* 16. 41. Now what was the iſſue of all thoſe oppoſitions? What effect had they? How did the power of *Pharoah*, the Revenge of *Egipt*, the backſliding of *Iſrael* prevaile? Why God made this one *Moſes* a *fenced brazen wall* to them All, he was never in the leaſt meaſure prevailed againſt; ſo long as he was with God, God was with him, no matter who was againſt him.

One thing onely would I commend to your conſiderations, *viz.* That this *Moſes*, thus preſerved, thus delivered, thus protected, falling into *one* Deviation, in *one* thing, from cloſe following the Lord, was taken off from enjoying the *cloſure* and fruit of all his labour, *Numb.* 20. 12. Otherwiſe he followed the Lord in a *difficult ſeaſon*, and did not want *unconquerable ſupportment*: Take heed of the ſmalleſt turning aſide from God: Oh looſe not the fruit of all your labour for *ſelfe*; for a *luſt*, or any thing that may turne you aſide.

Now the Lord will doe this,

1. Becauſe of his owne *Engagement*.
2. For our *Incouragement*.

1. Becauſe of his owne *Engagement*, and that is two fold,
   1. Of *Truth and Fidelity*.
   2. Of *Honour and Glory*.

1. His Truth and Veracity is ingaged in it. *Thoſe that honour him he will honour*, 1 *Sam.* 2: 30. If men honour him with *Obedience*, he will honour them with *preſervation*: *He will*

be

be with them while they are with him, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. While they are with him *in constancy of duty*, he will be with them to keep them in safety, *He will never leave them nor forsake them*, *Josh.* 1. 5. *No weapon that is framed against them shall prosper*, *Isa.* 54. 17. Now God is never *as the waters that faile* to any that upon his ingagements waite for him; he will not shame the faces of them that put their trust in him. Why should *our unbeleeving spirits charge that upon the God of Truth, which wee dare not impute to a man that is a worme, a lyar?* Will a man faile in his ingagement unto him, who upon that ingagement undertakes a difficult imployment for his sake? The truth is, it is either want of sincerity in our working, or want of faith in dependance, that makes us at any time come short of the utmost tittle, that is in any of the Lords engagements.

1. We want *sincerity*, and doe the Lords work, but with our owne *aimes* and ends, like *Jehu*; no wonder, if we be left to our selves for *our wages* and defence.

2. We want *Faith* also in the Lords worke, turne to our owne *counsels* for supportment; no marvell, if we come short of assistance; *If we will not beleeve we shall not be established.*

Looke to *sincerity* in working, and *faith* in dependance, Gods truth and fidelity will carry him out to give you inconquerable supportment: Deflexion from these, will be your destruction: You that are working on a new *Bottome*, worke also on new *principles*, put not *new Wine* into *old Bottles*, new designes into old Hearts.

Secondly, He is engaged in point of *Honour*, if they miscarry in his way, *What will he doe for his great name?* Yea so tender is the Lord herein of his Glory, that when he hath been exceedingly provoked to remove men out of his presence, yet because they have been called by his *Name*, and have visibly held forth a following after *him*, he would not suffer them to be trodden downe, left the enemy should exalt themselves, and say, *Where is now their God?* They shall not take from him the *honour* of former Deliverances and protections: In such a Nation as this, if the Lord now upon manifold provocations should give up *Parliament*, *People*, *Army* to cala-

miſy, and ruine, would not the *Glory* of former counſels, ſucceſſes, deliverances, be utterly loſt? would not men ſay it was not the Lord, *but chance that happened to them?*

2. For our *Encouragement*, the wayes of GOD are oftentimes attended with ſo many *difficulties*, ſo much Oppoſition, that they muſt be imbraced meerly becauſe his; no other *motive* in the World can ſuit them to us. I meane for ſuch as keep them immixed from their owne carnall and corrupt Intereſts: Now becauſe the Lord will not take off the *hardſhip* and difficulty of them, leaſt he ſhould not have the *Honour* of carrying on his work, againſt tumultuating oppoſition, hee ſecures poore weaklings of comfortable *aſſiſtance*, and anſwerable *ſucceſſe*, leſt his worke ſhould be wholy neglected. It is true, the Lord as our ſoveraigne Maſter may juſtly require a cloſe labouring in all his wayes, without the leaſt ſweetning endearments put upon them, onely as they are his whoſe we are, who hath a *dominion* over us: But yet as a a *tender Father*, in which relation he delights to exerciſe his will towards his owne in Chriſt, *Hee pittieth our infirmities, knowing that we are but duſt:* and therefore to invite us into the *darke*, into ways labourſome and toyleſome to fleſh and blood, he gives us in this ſecurity, that we ſhall be as *a feneed brazen wall* to the oppoſing ſons of men.

Uſe. 1. To diſcover the *Vanity* and *Folly* of all oppoſition to men called forth of God to doe his worke, and walking in his wayes; would you not thinke him *mad*, that ſhould ſtrike with his fiſt, and run with his head againſt a *feneed brazen wall* to caſt it downe? Is he like to have any ſucceſſe, but the *battering* of his fleſh, and the *beating* out of his braines? What doe the *waves* obtaine by daſhing themſelves with noiſe and dread againſt a *rocke*, but their owne beating to peeces? What prevailes a *man* by ſhooting his arrows againſt the *Skie*, but a *returne* upon his owne head? Nor is the moſt powerfull oppoſition to the ways of God, like to meet with better ſucceſſe: God looks no otherwiſe upon Oppoſers, then you would do upon a man attempting to thruſt downe *a feneed brazen wall* with his fingers. Therefore it is ſaid, that in their *proudeſt attempts*, ſtrongeſt *aſſaults*, deepeſt *counſels*, combinations, and

aſſociations,

associations, *he laughs them to scorne*, derides their folly, contemns their fury, lets them sweat in *vaine*, untill their day be come, *Psal.* 2. How birthlesse in our *owne*, as other *Generations* have been their swelling conceptions? What then is it that prevailes upon men to break through so many disappointments against the Lord, as they doe? Doubtlesse that of *Isa.* 23. 9. *Surely the Lord of Hosts hath a purpose to staine the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.* God *gives up men* unto it, that he may leave no earthly glory or honour without pollution or contempt: And therefore hath *Opposition* in our dayes, been turned upon so many hands, that God might leave no glory without contempt: Yet with this difference, that if the Lord will owne them, he will recover them from their opposition, as hath happened of late to the *Ministry* of *one*, and will happen ere long to the Ministry of *another* Nation; when the Lord hath a little stain'd the pride of their glory; they shall bee brought home againe by the *spirit of judgement and burning*: but if he owne them not, they shall perish under the opposition. And when it hath been *wheeled* about on all sorts of men, the *End* will be.

Be wise now therefore O yee Rulers, be Instructed yee that are Judges of the earth, serve the Lord with feare, and rejoyce with trembling, Psalm 2. 10, 11. See whence your *Assistance* commeth; see where lye the hils of your salvation, and say, *Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, yee are our Gods, for in thee the fatherlesse findeth mercy*, Hos. 14. 3. It is God alone who is *a Sunne and a Shield: his wayes doe good to the upright in heart.* Behold, here is a way to encompasse *England* with a *brazen wall*: let the Rulers of it walke in right wayes, with upright Hearts. Others have beene carefull to preserve *the people* to them, and *the City* to them, oh be you careful to preserve your God unto you; he alone can make you a *fenced wall*; if he departs, your wall departs, your shade departs. Give me leave to insist a little on one *particular*, which I choose out among many others: When God leades out his people to any great things, *the Angel of his presence* is still among them: *Use.* 2.

see at large *Exod.* 23. 20, 21, 22. The Angel of the Covenant, in whom is the name of God, that hath power of pardoning or retaining Transgressions, Jesus Christ, the *Angel that redeemeth his out of all their troubles*, Gen. 48. 16. hee is in the *middest* of them, and amongst them; And God gives this speciall Caution if we would have his Assistance, *that we should beware of him, and obey him, and provoke him not*: Would you then have Gods Assistance continued, take heed of *provoking the Angel of his presence*: provoke him not by slighting of his wayes, provoke him not by contemning his Ordinances; if you leave him to deale for himselfe, he will leave you to shift for your selves: what though his followers are at some difference (the best *knowing but in part*) about the Administration of some things in his Kingdome; the *Envious* one having also sown some bitter seeds of persecution, strife, envy, and contention among them? what though some poor creatures are captivated by *Sathan*, the Prince of Pride, to a contempt of all his *Ordinances*, whose soules I hope the Lord will one day free from the snare of the Devill? yet I pray give me leave (it is no time to contest, or dispute it) to beare witnesse in the behalfe of my *Master* to this one Truth, that if by your owne personall practise and observance, your Protection, Countenance, Authority, Laws, you doe not *assert*, *maintaine*, uphold the order of the Gospel, and Administration of the Ordinances of Christ, notwithstanding the noise and clamours of *Novell fancies*, which like *Jonah's* gourd have *sprung* up in a *night*, and will *wither in a day*, you will be forsaken by the Angel of Gods presence, and you will become an *astonishment* to all the Inhabitants of the Earth: and herein I do not speak as one hæsitating or dubious, but *positively assert* it, as the known mind *of God*, and whereof he wil not suffer any long to doubt, *Psalm* 2. *ult.*

See the Appendix about Tolleration.

Use 3. *Strengthen the weake hands, and confirme the feeble knees, say to them that are of a fearefull heart, be strong, feare not, behold your God will come with vengeance, even your God with a recompence, he will come and save you*, Isa. 35. 3, 4. Let the most weak and fearful, the fainting heart, the trembling spirit, and the doubting mind know, that full and *plenary* security, *perfect* peace

peace attends the upright in the wayes of God. You that are in Gods way, doe Gods worke, and take this cordiall for all your distempers, return not to former provoking wayes, and he will make you a fenced brazen wall.

And so I come to the third thing, which I proposed to consider, the Opposition, which men cleaving to the Lord in all his ways shal find, with the issue and success of it, *They shal fight against thee, but shall not prevaile.*

The words may be considered either as a *Prediction* depending on Gods præscience, of *what will be*, or a *Commination* from his just Judgement, of *what shallbe*.

In the first sence the Lord tells the Prophet, from the corruption, apostacy, stubbornesse of that People *what would come to passe*. In the 2d, what for their sins and provocations, by his just judgement *should come to passe*. Time will not allow me to handle the words in both Acceptations: wherefore I shall take up the *latter* only, *viz.* that it is a Commination of *what shall be* for the further misery of that wretched People, they shall *Judicially* be given up to a fighting against him.

God oftentimes gives up a sinfull People to a fruitlesse contention, and fighting with their only supporters, and meanes of deliverance. Obs.

They shall, &c. *Jeremiah* had laboured with God for them, and with them for God, that if possible peace being made they might be delivered, and to consummate their sins, *they are given up to fight against him.*

I cannot now insist upon particular instances, consult the *History* of the *Church* in all Ages, you shall find it continually upon all occasions verified. From the *Israelites* opposing *Moses*, to the *Ephraimites* contest with *Jephte*, the rejecting of *Samuel*, and so on to the *Kings* of the earth, giving their power to the *Beast* to wage Warre with the *Lamb*, with the *Inhabitants* of the World combining against the *witnesses* of Christ, is this Assertion held out. In following story, no sooner did any Plague or Judgement breake out against the *Roman Empire*, but instantly, *Christianos ad Leones*, their fury must be spent upon them, who were the onely supporters of it from irrecoverable ruine. Now the Lord doth this,

1. To

1. To *Seale* up a ſinfull Peoples deſtruction. *Elie's* Sonnes hearkened not, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them, 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. When God intends *Ruine* to a people, they ſhall walk in wayes, that tend thereunto: Now is their a readier way for a man to have a *houſe* on his head, then by *pulling* away the *Pillars* whereby it is ſupported? If by *Moſes* ſtanding in the *Gap*, the fury of the Lord be turned away, certainely if the people contend to remove him, their deſolation ſleepeth not. When therefore the Lord intends *to lay Cities waſt without Inhabitant, and houſes without men, to make a Land utterly deſolate*, the way of its accompliſhment is by *making the hearts of the People fat*, and their eares heavy, and ſhutting *their eyes that they ſhould not ſee*, and attend to the meanes of their recovery, *Iſa.* 6. 10, 11. So *gathering in his peace and mercies from a provoking people*, *Jer.* 16. 15.

2. To manifeſt his owne *power and ſoveraignty* in maintaining a ſmall handfull, oftimes a few ſingle perſons, a *Moſes*, a *Samuel*, two *Witneſſes* againſt the oppoſing rage of a hardned multitude. If thoſe who undertake his worke and buſineſſe in their ſeverall *Generations*, ſhould have withall, the concurrent obedience and aſſiſtance of others, whoſe *good* is intended, neither would his *name* be ſo ſeen, nor his *wayes* ſo honoured, as now, when he beares them up againſt all oppoſition. Had not the *people* of this Land been given up (many of them) to fight againſt the Deliverers of the Nation, and were it not ſo with them even at this time, how *darke* would have been the workings of *Providence*, which now by wreſtling through all oppoſition are ſo conſpicuous and cleare. When then a People, or any part of a people, have made themſelves *unworthy* of the good things intended to be accompliſhed by the Inſtruments of righteouſneſſe and peace, the Lord will *blow* upon their *waves*, that with rage and fury, they ſhall daſh themſelves againſt *them*, whom he will ſtrengthen with the *munition of Rocks*, not to be prevailed againſt. So that *Gods glory* and their *owne ruine*, lye at the bottome of this cloſe working of providence, in giving up a *ſinfull People* to a *fruitleſſe contending*, with their owne Deliverers, if ever they be delivered.

But

But is not a Peoples contending with the Instruments, by whom God worketh amongst them, and for them, a sin and provocation to the eyes of his glory? How then can the Lord be said to give them up unto it? *Obj.*

Avoyding all *Scholasticall discourses*, as unsuited to the work of this day; I shall briefly give in, unto you, how this is a *sinfull thing*, yet *sinners* given up unto it, without the least *extenuation* of their guilt, or colour for *charge* on the justice and goodnesse of God. *Answ.*

1. Then to *give up men* unto a thing in it selfe sinfull, is no more, but so to dispose and order things, that *sinners* may exercise and draw out their *sinfull principles*, in such a way. This that the Lord doth, the Scripture is full of *examples*, and hath Testimonies innumerable: That herein the *Holy one of Israel*, is no wayes Co-partner with the *guilt* of the soonnes of men, will appeare by observing the difference of these severall *Agents* in these four things.

1. The *Principle*, by which they worke.
2. The *Rule*, by which they proceed.
3. The *Meanes*, which they use.
4. The *End* at which they aime.

1. The *Principle* of operation in God is his owne *Soveraigne will*, and good pleasure. *Hee doth what ever hee pleaseth*, *Psal.* 115. 3. *He saith his purpose shall stand, and hee will doe all his* PLEASURE, *Isa.* 46. 10. *He hath mercy on whom he* WILL *have mercy, and whom hee* WILL *he hardneth*, *Rom.* 9. 13. *Giving no account* OF HIS MATTERS, *Job* 33. 18. This our Saviour rendereth as the onely Principle and reason of his hidden operations: *O Father so it seemed good in thy sight*, *Matth.* 11. 26. His *Soveraignty* in doing what he will with his owne, as the Potter with his clay, is the rise of his operations: So that what ever he doth, *who can say unto him, what doest thou*, *Job* 9. 12. *Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made mee thus?* *Rom.* 9. 20. And hence two things will follow.

1. *That what he doth, is just, and righteous, for so must all acts of supreame and absolute dominion be.*

2. *That he can be Author of nothing, but what hath existence and*

and being in it selfe, for he workes as the Fountaine of Beings. *This* sin hath not. So that though every *action*, whether good or bad, receives its *specification* from the working of Providence, and to that, is their *existence* in their severall kinds, to be Ascribed, yet an evill *action*, in the *evilnesse* of it, depends not upon Divine *concourse and influence*, for *good* and *evill* make not sundry kinds of Actions, but only a distinction of a *Subject* in respect of its *Adjuncts* and Accidents.

But now the *Principle of operation* in man, is *Nature* vitiated and corrupted: I say *Nature*, not that he worketh *naturally*, being a *free Agent*, but that these faculties, *will* and *understanding*, which are the principles of Operation are in *nature* corrupted, and from thence can nothing flow but evill: *An evill tree bringeth forth evill fruit: Men doe not gather Figs from Thistles: A bitter fountaine sends not forth sweet Waters: Who can bring a cleane thing out of an uncleane?* If the *fountaine* be poisoned, can the *streames* be wholesome? What can you expect of light and truth from a minde possest with vanity and darknesse? What from a will averted from the *chiefest good*, and fixt upon *present appearances*? What from an heart, the figment of whose imagination is onely evill?

2. Consider the difference in the *Rule of operation*: Every thing that workes hath a *Rule* to worke by, this is called a *Law*. In *that thing* which *to man* is sinfull, God worketh as it is a *thing* onely, Man as it is a *sinfull thing*: And how so? Why every ones sin is his Aberration from his Rule of operation or working. ἁμαρτάνειν, is *aberrare a scopo*. To *sin*, is, not to collime aright at the end proposed; ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία is a most exact definition of it: *Irregularity is its forme*, if it may be said to have a Forme: a Privations forme, is deformity. Looke then in any Action, wherein an *Agent* exorbitates from its *Rule*, that is sin: Now what is Gods rule in operation? *His owne infinite wise will alone*; he takes neither Motive, rise, nor occasion for any internall acts, from any thing without himselfe; *hee doth what ever hee pleaseth*, *Psal.* 115. 3. *He worketh all things according to the counsell of his*

his owne will, *Epheſ.* 1. 11. That is his owne *Law* of operation, and the *Rule* of righteouſneſſe unto others: working then agreeably to his owne will, which he alwayes muſt do, he is *free* from the obliquity of any action. What now is the *Rule* of the Sonnes of men? Why the revealed will of God; *Revealed things belong to us that we may doe them*, *Deut.* 29.29. Gods *revealed will* is the rule of our walking; our working; what ever *ſuits* not, anſwers not this, is *Evill.* Sinne is the tranſgreſſion of the Law, 1 *John* 3. 4. Here then comes in the *deformity*, the obliquity, the *ataxy* of any thing, God workes and man worketh; thoſe *Agents*, have ſeverall rules. God workes according to his *rule*, hence the action is good, as an Action: Man deviates from his *rule*, hence it is *ſinfull* in reſpect of its qualifications and Adjuncts. Man writes *faire* letters, upon a wet paper, and they run all into one blot, not the *skill* of the Scribe, but the *defect* in the Paper is the cauſe of the deformity: he that makes a *lame Horſe* goe, is the cauſe of his going, but the defect in his joynts, is the cauſe of his going lame: The *Sunne* exhales a ſteame from the *Dunghill*, the *Sunne* is the cauſe of the exhalation, but the *Dunghill* of the unwholeſome ſavour. The firſt cauſe is the proper cauſe of a *things being*, but the ſecond of its *being Evill.*

3. Conſider the *ſeverall operations and actings of God and Man*: for inſtance in a rebellious peoples fighting againſt their Helpers under him.

Now the *Acts* of God herein may be referred to ſix heads.

1. A *continuance* of the creatures being and life; *Upholding him by the word of his power*, *Heb.* 1. 3. When he might take him off in a moment: *Enduring them with much long ſuffering*, *Rom.* 9 22. When he might cut him off as he did the oppoſers of *Elijah*, *with fire from heaven*, 2 *Kings* 1. 12.

2. A *continuance of power of operation to them*, when he could *make their hands to wither like Jeroboams*, when they goe about to ſtrike, 1 *Kings* 13. 4. Or their hearts, to dye within them like *Nabals*, when they intend to be Churliſh, 1 *Sam.* 25. 37. but he raiſeth them up, or *makes them to ſtand*, that they may oppoſe, *Rom.* 9 11.

3. *Laying before them a ſuitable object for the drawing forth*

their corruption unto opposition, giving them such Helpers as shall in many things crosse their lusts, and exasperate them thereunto; as *Elijah* a man of a fiery zeale, for a lukewarme *Ahab*.

4. *Withholding from them that effectuall grace*, by which alone that sin might be avoided; a not actually keeping them from that sin by the might of his spirit and grace; that alone is effectuall grace, which is actuall; *he suffers them to walke in their owne wayes*:

And this the Lord may doe,

First, in respect of them, *Judicially*, they deserve to be forsaken, *Ahab* is left to fill up the measure of his iniquities, *add iniquity to iniquity*, *Psal.* 69. 27.

Secondly, In respect of himselfe, by way of *Soveraignety*, doing what he will with his owne, *hardening whom hee will*, *Rom.* 9. 15.

5. He positively sends upon their *understandings* that, which the Scripture sets out under the termes of *blindnesse*, *darknesse*, *folly*, *delusion*, *slumber*, *a spirit of giddinesse*, and the like; the places are too many to rehearse. What *secret actings* in, and upon the *minds* of men, what *disturbing* of their adviser, what *mingling* of corrupt affections with false carnall reasonings, what givings up to the power of darknesse, in *Satan* the Prince thereof, this *judiciall act* doth containe, I cannot insist upon: Let it suffice, God will not helpe them, to discern, yea he will cause *that they shall not* discerne but hide from their eyes the things that concerne their peace, and so give them up to contend with their onely Helpers.

6. Suitably, upon the *will and affections* he hath severall acts; confirming the one, in corruption, and giving up the other to vilenesse, *Rom.* 1. 24, 26. Untill the *heart* become throughly hardened, and the *conscience* seared: Not *forcing* the one, but leaving it to follow the Judgement of practicall reason, which being a *blind*, yea a *blinded* guide, whither can it lead a *blind* Follower, but into the ditch? Not *defiling* the *other* with infused *sensuality*, but provoking them to *act* according to inbred, native corruption, and by suffering frequent vile actings to confirme them in wayes of vilenesse.

Take

Take an instance of the whole; God gives Helpers and Deliverers to a sinfull people, because of their provocations, some or all of them shall not taste of the Deliverance, by them to be procured; wherefore though he sustaines their *lives* in being, whereby they might have opportunity to know his minde, and their owne peace, yet he gives them a *power* to contend with their *Helpers*, causing their helpers to act *such things*, as under consideration of circumstances, shall exceedingly provoke theses sinners: Being so *exasperated* and provoked, the Lord who is free in all his dispensations, refuseth to make out to them that *healing grace*, whereby they might be kept from a sinfull opposition: Yea being justly *provoked*, and resolved that they shall not taste of the plenty to come, he makes them *foolish and giddy* in their reasonings and counsels, blinds them in their *understandings*, that they shall not be able to discerne *plaine and evident things*, tending to their owne good, but in all their wayes, shall *erre like a drunken man in his vomit*; whence that they may not be recovered, because he will destroy them, he gives in hardnesse and obstinacy upon their hearts and spirits, leaving them to *suitable affections*, to contend for their owne ruine.

Now what are the *wayes and methods* of sinfull mans working in such an *opposition*, would be too long for me to declare; what *prejudices* are erected, what *lusts* pursued, what corrupt *Intereſts* acted, and followed; how *selfe* is honoured, what false *pretences* coyned, how *God* is sleighted, if I should goe about to lay open, I must looke into the *Hell* of these times, then which nothing can be more loathsome and abhominable: Let it suffice, that sinfull *selfe*, sinfull *lusts*, sinfull *prejudices*, sinfull *blindnesse*. sinfull *carnall feares*, sinfull *corrupt intereſts*, sinfull *fleshly reasonings*, sinfull *passions*, and vile *affections* doe all concur in such a work, are all woven up together in such a Web.

4. See the distance of their *aimes*, God's aime is onely the manifestation of his owne Glory (then which nothing but himselfe is so infinitely good, nothing so righteous that it should be) and this by the way of goodnesse and severity, *Rom.* 11. 22, *Goodnesse* in faithfulnesse and mercy, *preserving*

his, who are opposed [illegible] whereby his Glory is exceedingly advanced: *Severity* towards the Opposers, that by a *sinfull cursed opposition*, they make up the measure of their iniquities, and receive this at the hand of the Lord, that they *lye down in sorrow*, wherin also he is glorious.

God forbid, that I should speak *this*, of all, that for any time, or under any *temptation* may be carryed to an opposition in any kind, or degree to the *instruments* of Gods glory amongst them: Many for a season may doe it, and yet belong to God, who shall be recovered in due time: It is onely of men given up, *forsaken*, opposing all the *Appearances* of God with his *Saints* and people in all his wayes, of whom I speak.

Now what are the ends of this *Generation of Fighters* against this *brazen wall*, and how distant from those of the Lords? *They consult to cast him downe from his excellency, whom God will exalt, Psal.* [illegible]*4. They thinke not as the Lord, neither doth their heart meane so, but it is in their heart to destroy and to cut off, Isa.* 10. 7. To satisfie their owne corrupt lusts, *ambition, avarice. revenge, superstition*, contempt of Gods people, because his, *hatred* of the yoak of the LORD, *fleshly Interests*; even for these and such like *Ends* as these, is their undertaking.

Thus though there be a *concurrence* of God and Man in the same thing, yet considering the distance of their *Principles, Rules, Actings*, and *Ends*; It is apparent that *Man* doth *sinfully*, what the *Lord* doth *judicially*; which being an answer to the former Objection, I returne to give in some *Uses* to the Point.

Use 1. Let men, constant, sincere, upright in the wayes of God, especially in *difficult times* know, what they are to expect from *many*, yea the *most* of the *Generation*, whose good they intend, and among whom they live; Opposition and fighting is like to be their *Lot*, and that not onely *it will be so* because of mens lusts, corruptions, prejudices, but also *it shall be so* from Gods righteous Judgements against a stubborne people: *They* harden their hearts *that it may be so* to compasse their ends, and God heardens their hearts *that it shall be so* to bring about

about his aimes: They *will doe it* to execute *their revenge upon others*, They *shall doe it* to execute *Gods vengeance* upon themselves. This may be for consolation, that in their contending there is nothing but the *wrath of man* against them, whom they oppose (which God will restraine, or cause it to turne to his praise) but there is the *wrath of God* against themselves, which who can beare? This then let all expect, who engage their *hearts* to God, and follow the *Lambe* whither ever he goeth.

Men walking in the *syncerity of their hearts* are very apt to conceive that all *Sheaves* should bow to theirs, that all men should cry *Grace, Grace*, to their proceedings: Why should any oppose? *Quid meruere?* Alas! the more *upright* they are, the fitter for the Lord by them to breake a Gainsaying people: Let men keep close to those wayes of God whereto protection is annexed, and let not their hearts faile them because of the people of the Land; the storme of their fury will be like the *plague* of Haile in *Egipt*, it smote onely the *Cattel* that were in the field; those, who upon the word of *Moses* drove them into the houses, preserved them alive. If men wander in the *feild* of their owne wayes, of selfe-seeking, oppression, ambition, and the like, doubtlesse the storme will carry them away; but for those, who keep house, who keep close to the Lord, though it may have much noyse, terrour and dread with it, it shall not come nigh them. And if the Lord for causes best known, known onely to his infinite wisedome, should take off any *Josiahs* in the opposition, he will certainly effect two things by it.

1. *To give them rest and peace.*

2. *Further his cause and truth by drawing out the prayers and appeales of the residue, and* this *living they valued above their lives.*

All *you* then that are the Lords *workmen* be alwayes prepared for a storme, wonder not, that men see not the *wayes* of the Lord, nor the *judgements* of our God, many are *blinded*. Admire not, that they will so endlesly engage themselves into fruitlesse oppositions, they are *hardened*. Be not amazed, that evidence of truth and righteousnesse will not affect them, they

they are *corrupted*. But this doe, *Come and enter into the Chambers of GOD, and you shall be safe untill this whole indignation be overpast.*

I speak of *All* them, and *onely* them who follow the Lord in all his ways with upright hearts, and single minds, if the Lord will have you to be a *Rock* and a *brazen wall* for men to dash themselves against, and to breake in pieces, though the service be grievous to flesh and blood, yet it is *His*, whose you are, be prepared, the wind blowes, a storme may come.

Use. 2. Let men set upon *opposition* make a diligent enquiry, whether there be no *hand* in the businesse, but their owne? Whether their counsels be not *leavened* with the wrath of God? And their thoughts *mixed* with a spirit of giddinesse, and themselves carried on to their owne destruction? Let me see the *opposer* of the present wayes of God, who upon his opposition is made more *humble*, more *self-denying*, more empty of *self-wisedome*, more *fervent* in supplycations and waiting upon God, then formerly: and I will certainely blot him out of the Roll of men judicially hardened. But if therewith, men become also *proud*, *selfish*, *carnally wise*, *revengefull*, *furious upon earthly Interests*, *full*, *impatient*, doubtlesse God is departed, and an evill spirit from the Lord prevaileth on them. O that men *would looke about them* before it be too late, see the Lord disturbing them, before the waves returne upon them; know that they may pull downe some *Antickes* that make a great shew of supporting the Church, and yet indeed are *Pargetted posts* supported by it; the foundation is on a *rock*, that shall not be prevailed against.

Use. 3. See the infinite *wisedome and soveraignty* of Almighty God, that is able to bring *light* out of darkenesse, and to compasse his owne *righteous Judgements* by the sinfull advisings and undertakings of men. Indeed the Lords *Soveraignty* and dominion over the Creature doth not in any thing more exalt it self, then in working in all the *Reasonings*, debates, consultations of men, to bring about his owne counsels through their free workings. That men should use, improve their *wisedome*, *freedome*, *choyce*, yea *lusts*, not once thinking of God, yet all

that

that while doe his worke more then their owne: This is the Lords doing and it is marvellous in our eyes.

Of the last part of my Text I shall not speak at all, neither indeed did I intend.

OF TOLERATION:

And the Duty of the Magistrate, About RELIGION:

THE Times are *busie*, and we must be *breife*. *Prefaces* for the most part are at all times *needlesse*, in these, *troublesome*. Mine shall only be, that ἄνευ προοιμίων καὶ παθῶν, without either *Preface* or *Passion*, I will fall to the businesse in hand. The *thing* about which I am to deale, is commonly called *Toleration in Religion, or Toleration of severall Religions*. The *way* wherein I shall proceed, is not by *contest*, thereby to give occasion for the reciprocation of a *Saw* of debate with any, but by the laying downe of such *positive observations*, as being either not *apprehended*, or not rightly *improved*, by the most, yet lye at the bottome of the whole *difference* betweene men about this businesse, and tend in themselves to give *light* unto a righteous and equitable *determination* of the maine thing contended about: And lastly herein, for *method*, I shall first, consider the *grounds* upon which that *Non toleration* whereunto I cannot consent, hath been and is still indeavoured to be supported, which I shall be necessitated to remove, and then in order assert the positive *Truth*, as to the substance of the businesse under contest: all in these ensuing observations.

1. Although the expressions of *Toleration*, and *Non toleration* wherewith the thing in controversie is vested, doe seeme

to

to cast the *Affirmation* upon them who plead for a *forbearance* in things of Religion towards dissenting persons, yet the truth is, they are purely upon the *Negation*, and the *Affirmative* lyes fully on the other part: and so the weight of proving (which ofttimes is heavy) lyes on their shoulders. Though *non-toleration* sound like a *negation*, yet *punishment*, (which termes in this matter are ισοδυναμοῦντα) is a deep *Affirmation*. And therefore it sufficeth not men to say, *That they have consulted the minde of God, and cannot finde that hee ever spake to any of his Saints or people to establish a Toleration of errour*: And yet this is the first argument to oppose it, produced in the late Testimony of the Reverend and learned Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*. *Affirmative* precepts must be produced, for a *non Toleration*, that is the punishing of erring persons. For *actings*, of such high concernment, men doe generally desire a better warrant then this, *There is nothing in the Word against them*. Cleare *light* is needfull for men, who walke in *paths*, which lead directly to houses of *Blood*. God hath not spoken of *Non-Toleration*, is a certaine rule of *Forbearance*. But God hath not spoken of *Toleration*, is no rule of *acting* in opposition thereunto. (What he hath spoken one *way* or *other*, shall be afterwards considered.) *Positive actings* must have *positive precepts*, and rules for them, as *conscience* is its owne guide. If then you will have *persons* deviating in their apprehensions from the *truth* of the Gospell, civilly *punished*, you must bring better *warrant* then this, that God hath not spoken against it, or *I shall not walke in your wayes, but refraine my foot from your path*.

2. That undoubtedly there are very many things under the *command* of the Lord, so becomming our *duty*, and within his *promise*, so made our *priviledge*, which yet if not *performed*, or not *enjoyed*, are not of *humane* cognizance, as *faith* it selfe. Yet because the *knowledge of the Truth* is in that rank of things, this also is urged as of weight, by the same *learned persons*, to the businesse in hand.

3. *Errours*, though never so impious, are yet distinguished from *Peace-disturbing* enormities. If *Opinions* in their owne nature tend to the disturbance of the *publike peace*, either that

publike

publick Tranquillitie is not of God, or God alloweth a penall reſtraint of thoſe *Opinions*. It is a miſtake, to affirme, that thoſe who plead for *Toleration*, doe allow of *puniſhment* for *offences* againſt the *ſecond* Table, not againſt the *firſt*. The caſe is the ſame both in reſpect of the *one*, and the *other*. What Offences againſt the *ſecond* Table are puniſhable? Doubtleſſe not all: but onely ſuch as by a *diſorderly Eruption* pervert the courſe of *publicke* quiet and ſociety. Yea none but ſuch, fall under *humane* Cognizance. The warrant of exerciſing *vindictive power* amongſt men, is from the *reference* of Offences to their common tranquility. *Delicta puniri, publice intereſt.* Where puniſhment is the *debt*, *Bonum totius*, is the *Creditour* to exact it. And this is allowed, as to the Offences againſt the firſt Table, If any of *them* in their owne Nature (not ſome mens apprehenſions) are *diſturbances* of publick peace, *they alſo* are puniſhable. Only let not this be meaſured by diſputable conſequences, no more then the other are. Let the *Evidence* be in the things themſelves, and *Actum eſt*, let who will *plead* for them. Hence,

Popiſh Religion, warming in its very Bowels, a fatall *Engine* againſt all *Magiſtracy* amongſt us, cannot upon our Conceſſions plead for Forbearance: It being a knowne and received *Maxime*, that the Goſpell of Chriſt, claſhes againſt no *righteous* ordinance of man.

And this be ſpoken to the third Argument of the forenamed Reverend perſons from the *Analogie* of delinquencies againſt the firſt and ſecond Table.

4. The *Plea* for the puniſhment of Erring perſons, from the *penall conſtitution* under the Old Teſtament againſt *Idolaters* (which in the next place is urged) ſeemes not very firme and convincing. The vaſt *diſtance* that is between *Idolatry*, and any *Errors* whatſoever, as meerly ſuch, however propagated or maintained with *Obſtinacy*, much impaireth the ſtrength of this Argumentation.

Idolatry is the yeelding unto a *Creature* the *ſervice and worſhip* due to the *Creator*: *Rainold. de. Idol. li. 2. Cap. 1. S. 1. Idololatria eſt circa omne Idolum famulatus & ſervitus, Tertul. de Pol.* The attendance and ſervice of any *Idoll. Idololatræ dicuntur*

qui simulachri eam servitutem exhibent quæ deberur Deo: August. lib. 1. de Trinit. Cap. 6. They are Idolaters who give that service to *Idols* which is due unto God. To render glory to the Creature as to God, is Idolatry, say the Papists: *Bell. de Eccles. Triump. lib. 2. cap. 24. Greg. de Valen. de Idol. lib. 1. cap. 1.* Suitable to the description of it given by the Apostle, *Rom. 1. 25.* plainely, that whereunto the *Sanction* under debate was added, as the bond of the Law against it (which was the bottom of the commendable proceedings of diverse Kings of *Judah* against such) was a *voluntary relinquishment of Jehovah* revealed unto them, to give the honour due unto him to *dunghill Idols*. Now though *Error* and Ignorance oftimes lye at the bottome of this *abhomination*, yet *Error* properly so called, and which under the name of *Heresie* is opposed, is sufficiently differenced therefrom. That Common definition of Heresie, that it is an *Error, or Errors in or about the Fundamentals of Religion, maintained with stubbornesse and pertinacy after Conviction* (for the maine received by most Protestant Divines) will be no way suited unto *that*, which was before given of *Idolatry* and is as commonly received; being indeed much more cleare, as shall be afterward declared. That this *latter* is proper and suitable to those *Scripturall descriptions*, which we have of *Heresie*, I dare not affert: but being received by *them* who urge the *punishment* thereof, it may be a sufficient ground of affirming, that *those things* whose *definitions* are so extreamely different, are also very *distant* and discrepant in themselves, and therefore *Constitutions* for the dispofall of things concerning the *one*, cannot *eo nomine*, conclude the *other*. Neither is the *Inference* any stronger, then, that a man may be *hanged* for *coveting*, because he may be *so* for *murdering*.

The penall *Constitutions* of the *Judaicall policy* (for so they were which yet I urge not) concerning *Idolaters*, must be stretched beyond their *Limits*, if you intend to enwrap *Hereticks* within their Verge. If *Hereticks* be also *Idolaters*, as the *Papists*. (The poor *Indians* who worship a piece of *red cloath*, the *Egiptians* who adored the *Deities*, which grew in their owne *Gardens*, being not more befotted with this *abhomination*

then

then they who proſtrate their ſoules unto, and laviſh their Devotion upon a *peice of Bread*, a little before they prepare it for the draught, ſo caſting the *ſtumbling block of their iniquities* before the faces of poore *Heathens* and *Jewes*, cauſing *Averroes* to breath out his ſoule, in this expreſſion of that ſcandall, *Quoniam Chriſtiani manducant Deum quem adorant, ſit anima mea cum Philoſophis.*) I ſay then, the *caſe* ſeemes to me, to have received ſo conſiderable an *alteration* that the *Plea* of *forbearance* is extreamely weakened; as to my preſent apprehenſion. However for the preſent, I remove ſuch from this debate.

5. The like to this alſo, may be ſaid concerning *Blaſphemy*, the *Law* whereof is likewiſe commonly urged in this cauſe. The eſtabliſhment for the puniſhment of a *Blaſphemer* is in *Lev.* 24.16. Given it was upon the occaſion of the *blaſpheming* and *curſing* of the Son of an *Egyptian*, upon his ſtriving & contending with an *Iſraelite*. Being (probably) in his own *apprehenſion* wronged by his *Adverſary*, he fell to *Reviling* his God. The Word here uſed to expreſſe his ſinne, is נקב ſignifying alſo to *peirce*, and is twice ſo rendered, *Iſa.* 36. 6. *Hab.* 3. 14. Deſperate expreſſions *peircing* the honour and glory of the moſt High, willingly and wilfully, were doubtleſſe his *death deſerving* crime. It is the ſame word that *Balack* uſed to *Baalam*, when he would have perſwaded him to a *deliberate* curſing and powring out of the *Imprecations* on the people of God, *Numb.* 23. 13, 14. A reſolved *peircing* of the Name and glory of God, with curſed *reproaches*, is the crime here ſentenced to death. The *Schoolemen* tell us, that to compleate *Blaſphemy* the perverſe *affection* of the Heart in deteſtation of the goodneſſe of God, joyned with the Reproaches of his Name, is required. *Thom.* 22 *q.* 13. *a.* 1. *ad* 1*um.* Which how remote it is from *Error* of any ſort (I meane within the compaſſe of them whereof we ſpeak) being a pure miſapprehenſion of the *underſtanding*, imbraced (though falſely) for the honor of God, I ſuppoſe is eaſily conceived: and ſo conſequently that the *Argument* for the death of a perſon *erring*, becauſe he came off no eaſier, of old who *blaſphemed*, is a *baculo ad anguilam.*

If any shall say that *Blasphemy* is of a larger extent, and more generall acceptation in the *Scripture*, I shall not deny it. But yet that, that *kind* of *blasphemy* which was punishable with *violent* death, was comprehensive of any *inferiour crime*, I suppose cannot be proved. However, *Blasphemy* in the Scripture is never taken in any place that I can remember, for a mans *maintaining* his owne *Error*, but for his *reviling* and speaking evill of the *Truth* which he receiveth not, and so *Paul* before his conversion was a *Blasphemer*.

Acts 26.11.
Acts 18. 6.
1 Tim. 1. 13.

Now if men to whom *forbearance* is indulged in *by-paths* of their owne, shall make it their *worke* to cast dirt on the *better* wayes of *truth*, it is to me very questionable whether they do not offend against that *prime* dictate of nature, for the preservation of *humane* society, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*; and for such, I will be no Advocate.

Neither can indeed the *Law of Blasphemy*, be impartially urged by us in any case of Heresie whatsoever. For,

1. The *pœnall Sanctions* of the Lawes of God are not in *England* esteemed of *Morall* equity, and perpetually indispensable; for if so, why doe *Adulterers* unmolested, behold the violent death of *Stealers*.

2. The *Blasphemer* by that *Law* was not allowed his *Clergy*. Dye he must without mercy, no *roome* being left for the intervention of *Repentance*, as to the removall of his *temporall* punishment. When once the *Witnesses* Garments were rent, he was *Anathema*: But in case of any *Heresie*, repentance, yea *Recantation* is a sure *Antidote* (at least for once, so it is among the Papists) against all corporall sufferinge.

6. Neither doth that place in *Zachary*, *Chap.* 13. *v.* 3. concerning the *running through* of the false *Prophet*, more prove or approve of *the punishment* of death to be inflicted for *misapprehensions* in the matters of Religion (and if it proves not that, it proveth nothing, for *slaying* is the thing expressed, and certainely if *prooves* be taken from the *Letter*, the *Letter* must be obeyed, or we force the Word to serve our *Hypothesis*) then that place of *Job.* 10. *He that entereth not by the doore is a thiefe and a robber*; which *Bellarmine* strongly urgeth to this very purpose,

purpose, because *Theives* and *Robbers*, are so dealt withall, *righteously*: *Bell. lib. de Laicis. cap.* 21. If such *deductions* may be allowed it will be easie to prove, *quidlibet, ex quolibet*, at any time.

If the *Letter* be urged, and the sense of the *Letter* as it lyes ([a] *indeed the figurative sense of such places is the proper literall sense of them*) let that sense alone be kept to: Let *Parents* then passe sentence, condemne, and execute their *Children*, when they turne *Seducers*. And that in any kind whatsoever, into what *Seduction* soever they shall be ingaged; be it most *pernicious*, or in things of lesse *concernment*; The *Letter* allows of none of our distinctions; be they *convinced* or not convinced, *obstinate* or not obstinate, all is one, so it must be, *thrust through*, and slain by their *Parents*, must they fall to the ground; Onely observe, *his Father and his Mother that begat him*, must be made Magistrates, *Prophets* with uncleane spirits be turned into *Hereticks*, onely *thrusting through*, that must be as it is in the Letter; yea though plainely the *Party*, of whom it is said, *Thou shalt not live*, *v.* 3. is found alive, *v.* 6. Surely such an *Orleans* glosse is scarce sufficient to secure a *conscience* in slaying *Hereticks*. But when Men please, this whole *place* shall directly point at the *Discipline* of the *Churches* and their spirituall *censures* under the Gospel, *curing* deceivers and bringing them home to *confession* and *acknowledgement* of their folly: see the late *Annot.* of the Bible.

[a] *August. de util. creden. cap.* 3. *Thom. pp. q.* 1 *a.* 10. *Zanch. de SS. q.* 12. *cap.* 2. *reg.* 10. *Tilen. Syntag. Theol. de interpret. S. thes.* 8. *Whitak. de SS. qu.* 5. *cap.* 7. *Armin. disput. pri. Thes.* 9. 1. *Ames. Med. Theol. cap.* 34. *Thes.* 22.

7. From the asserting of the authority, and description of the duty of the Magistrate, *Rom* 13. the *Argument* is very easie, that is produced, for the suppressing, by *externall force*, of *erronious* persons: The *Paralogisme* is so soule and notorious, in this arguing, *hee is to suppresse evill deeds, Heresie is an evill deed, therefore that also*, that it needs no confutation. That he is to punish all evill deeds was never yet affirmed. *Unbeliefe* is a worke of the flesh; so is *Coveting*: one the *root sinne*, against the *first*, the other against the *second Table*: Yet in themselves, both exempted from the *Magistrates* Cognizance and jurisdiction. The *evill doers* doubtlesse for whose terrour and *punishment* he is appointed, are such as by their deeds, disturbe that *humane Society*, the defence and protection wherof,

of, is to him committed. That among the *Number* of these, are *Errours*, the depravations of mens understandings, hath not yet been proved.

8. The case of the *Seducer*, from *Deut.* 13. is urged with more shew of *reason* then any of the others, to the *businesse* in hand; but yet the extreame *discrepancies* between the *proofe*, and the thing intended to be *proved*, make any *Argumentation* from this *place*, as to the matter in hand, very *intricate*, obscure, and difficult. For,

1. The Person here spoken of, pretends an immediate *Revelation* from Heaven: he pretends *Dreames*, and gives *signes and wonders*, *v.* 1. and so exempts his spirit from any *regular* tryall: *Hereticks* for the most part, offer to be tryed by the *Rule* that is *in Medio*, acknowledged of all; a few distempered *Enthusiasts* excepted.

2. His businesse is, to *Entice* from the worship of *Jehovah*, not in respect of the manner but the object, *v.* 5. *All Hereticks* pretend the feare of that great Name.

3. The accepting and owning *Idoll dunghill Gods* in his roome, is the thing *perswaded to*, *v.* 2, (and those were onely Stocks and Stones) and this in *opposition* to *Jehovah*, who had revealed himselfe by *Moses*. *Hereticks*, worship him, *owne* him, and abhorre all *thoughts* of turning away from following after him, according to their *Erroneous* apprehensions. *Manichees*, *Marcionites*, *Valentinians*, and such like names of Infidels, I reckon not among Hereticks, neither will their brainsick *Paganish follies*, be possibly comprehended under that definition of *Heresie* which is now generally received. *Mahumetans* are farre more rightly tearmed *Hereticks*, then they.

4. This *Seducer* was to dye without mercy: And *Aynsworth* observes from the *Rabbines*, that this *Offender* alone, had *traps* laid to catch him; and were he but once overheard to whisper *his seduction*, though never so secretly, there was no *Expiation* of his transgression, without his owne blood: but now this *place* is urged for all kind of restraint and *punishment* whatsoever. (Now where God requires *blood*, is it allowed to man, to *Commute* at an inferiour *Rate*?) So I confesse

ſelfe it is urged. But yet what lyes at the *Bottome*, in the *Chamberd of their bullyes* who plead for the *Power* of the Magiſtrate to puniſh *erring* Perſons, from thoſe and ſuch like *places* as theſe, is too apparent. *Blood* is there: *ſwiftly*, or *ſlowly*, they walke to the Ghambers of death.

5. *Obſtinacy* after conviction, *Turbulency*, &c. which are now laid downe, as the maine *weights* that turne the *Scale* on the ſide of *Security*, are here not once mentioned, nor by any thing in the leaſt intimated. If he have *done* it, yea but *once*, openly, or ſecretly, whether he have been *convinced* of the ſinfulneſſe of it, or no, be he *obſtinate* or otherwiſe, it is not once inquired, dye he muſt, as if he had committed *Murder*, or the like indiſpenſable *death-procuring* crime. If the puniſhment then of *erring* Perſons be urged from this place, all conſideration of their *Conviction*, *Obſtinacy*, *Pertinacy*, muſt be laid aſide: the *Text* allows them no more Plea in this buſineſſe, then our *Law* doth in the caſe of wilfull Murder.

6. *Repentance* and *Recantation* will in the judgement of all, reprieve an *erring perſon* from any ſentence of any *puniſhment* corporall whatſoever; and many reaſons may be given, why they ſhould ſo doe. Here is no ſuch allowance. *Repent* or not *repent*, *recant* or not *recant*, he hath no ſacrifice of *Expiation* provided for him, dye he muſt.

7. This *Law* containes the *Sanction* of the third Commandement as the *whole*, was a Rule of the *Jewiſh politie* in the Land of *Canaan*: This amongſt us is generally conceived not binding, as *ſuch*.

8. The formall reaſon of this *Law* by ſome inſiſted on, *becauſe he ſought to turne a man from Jehovah*:

1. Is of force onely in this caſe of the *object* whereunto *ſeduction* tends; *viz.* ſtrange gods, and no other.

2. Turning from *Jehovah* reſpects not any manner of backſlyding in reſpect of the way of worſhip, but a falling away from him as the *object* of worſhip.

Now there being theſe and many other *diſcrepancies* hindering the caſes propoſed from running *parallell*, I profeſſe for my part, I cannot ſee how any ſuch *evident* deductions can poſſibly be drawne from hence, as to be made a bottome of

practice

practise and acting in things of so high concernment. What may be allowed from the *equity* of those and the like *Constitutions*, and deduced by *Analogie* and proportion to the businesse in hand, I shall afterwards declare.

The *summe* of what is usually drawne out from *holy Writ*, against such a *forbearance*, as I suppose may be asserted, and for the punishing *Heretick*s with *Capitall punishments* being briefly discussed, I proceed in the next place to such other *generall observations*, as may serve to the further clearing of the businesse in hand, and they are these that follow.

1. The *forbearance of*, or opposition *unto* Errors, may be considered, with respect either unto *Civill* or *Spiritual* Judicature. For the *Latter*, it is either *Personall or Ecclesiasticall*, properly so called. *Personall* forbearance of Errors in a *spirituall* sense, is a *Moral* Toleration or *approbation* of them. So also is Ecclesiasticall. The *Warrant* for *proceedance* against them, on that hand is plaine and evident. Certainely *this way*, *no Error* is to be forborne. All persons who have any *Interest* and share in *Truth*, are obliged in their *severall* wayes and stations, to an opposition unto every Error. An opposition to be carryed on by Gospel *Mediums*, and spirituall weapons. Let them according as they are called or opportuned, disprove them from the Word, *Contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the Saints*: Erring Persons are usually (*Bono animo*, sayes *Salvian*) very *zealous* to propagate their false conceptions; and shall the *Children* of Truth be backward in her defence. *Precepts* unto this as a duty, *commendations* of it, *incouragements* unto it, are very frequent in the Gospel. Alike is this *duty* incumbent on all *Churches* walking to the rule. The spirituall Sword of *Discipline*, may be lawfully sheathed in the *blood* of Heresies. No spirituall *Remedy*, can be too sharpe for a spirituall *disease*. When the *Cure* is suited to the *Malady*, there is no danger of the *application*. And this is not denyed by any. He that submits himselfe to any *Church society*, does it *ea lege*, of being obedient to the *Authority of Christ*; in that Church in all its Censures. *Volenti non fit injuria*. Error is *offensive*, and must be proceeded against. *Examples* and *precepts* of this, abound in the Scriptures. The *blood* of many

many erring persons (I doubt not) will one day have a *Quo warranto* granted them, against their (as to the particulars in debate) *Orthodox* slayers, who did it to promote the service of God. Let them not fear an *after reckoning*, who use the *Discipline* of Christ, according to his appointment.

This being considered, the *occasion* of a most frequent *Paralogisme* is removed. If errours must be *tolerated*, say some, then men may doe what they please, without controll? *No meanes* it seems must be used to reclaime them? But! is *Gospel Conviction* no meanes? Hath the Sword of *Discipline* no edge? Is there no *meanes* of instruction in the *New Testament* established, but a Prison and a Halter? Are the *Hammer* of the Word, and the *Sword* of the Spirit, which in days of Old, *broke* the stubbornnest Mountaines, and *overcame* the proudest Nations, now quite useless? God forbid. Were the *Churches* of Christ, established according to his *appointment*, and the professors of the *Truth*, so knit up *in the unity of the Spirit and bond of peace*, as they ought to be, and were in the *Primitive* times; I am perswaded those *despised* Instruments would quickly make the proudest *Hereticke* to tremble. When the *Churches* walked in sweet *Communion*, giving each other continuall *account* of their *affaires*, and warning each other of all, or any such persons, as either in practice, or doctrine, walked not with a *right foot* (as we have examples in *Clem. Epist. ad Corinth.* the Churches of *Vienna and Lyons*, to those of *Asia*: *Euseb.* of *Ignatius* to severall persons and Churches, of *Iræneus* to *Victor. Euseb. Dyonisius* to *Stephen*, *ibid.* and the like) *Hereticks* found such cold entertainment, as made them *ashamed* if not weary of their *chosen* wanderings; but this is not my *present* businesse.

2. There is an *opposition*, or *forbearance*, in reference to a *civill* Judicature, and proceedence of things, which respecteth Errors, in a *Reall* sense, as to the inflicting, or not inflicting of *punishment*, on Religious Delinquents. And this is the *sole* thing under debate, *viz.*

Whether Persons enjoying civill Authority over others, being intrusted therewithall, according to the Constitutions of the place and Nation where the lot of them both, by Providence is fallen,

are invested with power from above, and commanded in the Word of God, to coerce, restraine, punish, confine, imprison, banish, hange, or burne, such of those persons under their jurisdiction, as shall not embrace, professe, beleeve, and practice, that Truth and way of worship, which is revealed unto them of God, or how far, into what degrees, by what means, in any of these wayes, may they proceed.

The *Generall* propositions and considerations of the *penall Lawes* of God, which were before laid downe, have, as I suppose, left this businesse to a naked debate from the word of truth, without any such *prejudices* on either part, as many take from a *misapprehension* of the mind of God in them; and therefore by the Readers patience, I shall venture upon the *whole* anew, as if no such *arguments* had ever been proposed, for the *affirmative* of the Question in hand, not declining the utmost *weight*, that is in any of them, according to equity and due proportion. And here first I shall give in a *few* things.

1. To the *Question* it selfe.
2. To the *Manner* of handling it.

1. To the *Question* it selfe, for herein, I suppose,

1. That the Persons enjoying *Authority*, doe also enjoy the *truth*, which is to the advantage of the *Affirmative*.

2. That their *Power* in *civill* things is *just* and unquestionable, which also looses favourably on that side.

3. That *Non-toleration* makes out it selfe in positive infliction of *punishment*, which *is so*, or is *nothing*. Casting men out of *protection*, exposing them to *vulgar violence*, is confestly unworthy of men representing the authority of God, and contrary to the *whole end* of their trust.

2. To the manner of handling this Question among persons at variance; and here, I cannot but observe.

1. That if I have taken my *aime* aright, there is no one *thing* under debate amongst *Christians*, that is agitated with more *confidence* and mutuall animosity of the *Parties* Litigant: Each charging other with dreadfull *inferences*, streames of blood, and dishonour to God, flowing out from their *severall* perswasions. So that ofttimes, in stead of a *faire* dispute, you meet on this subject with a *Pathetical* outcry, as though all Religion were utterly contaminated and trampled underfoot,

if

if both these *contradictory* assertions, be not imbraced. Now seeing that in it selfe, it is a thing wherein the *Gospel* is exceedingly *sparing*, if not altogether silent, certainely there must be a further *Interest*, then of Judgement alone, or else that, very much *prejudiced* with corrupt *affections*, or men could not possibly be carryed out with so much *violence*, upon supposed *selfe-created* consequences, wherwith in this cause they urge one another.

2. That generally, thus much of *private Interest* appeares in the severall *contesters* that *Non-toleration* is the Opinion of the *many*, and these enjoying the *countenance* of *Authority*: *Toleration* of the Oppressed, who alwayes goe under the Name of the *faction* or *factions*, the unavoidable *Livery* of the smaller number professing *a way of worship* by themselves, be it *right* or wrong. I doe not desire to lay forth the usuall *deportment*, of men, seeking the suppressing of others differing from them, towards *those* in Authority. It is but *too clearely* made out, by dayly experience: If they close with them, they are *Custodes utriusque Tabulæ*, the Churches *Nursing Fathers*, *&c.* what they please. But if they draw back for want of *light* or *truth* to serve them, *Logges* and *Storks* find not worse entertainement from *Froggs*, then they from some of them. Such things as these, may, (nay *ought* to) be especially heeded by every one, that knowes what *influence* corrupt affections have upon the *judgements* of men, and would willingly take the paines to wipe his *Eyes* for the discerning of the truth.

These things premised, I *assert*, That

Non-Toleration in the Latitude, which is for *Persons in Authority*, enjoying the truth (or supposing they doe enjoy it) to punish in an *Arbitrary* way, (according to what they shall conceive to be *condigne*.) men, who will not forsake their owne convictions, about any head, or heads, of Christian Religion whatsoever; to joyne with what they hold out, either for beliefe or worship (after the using of such wayes of perswasion as they shall thinke fit) is no way *warranted* in the *Gospel*, nor can any *sound proofe* for such a course be taken from the *Old Testament*.

The *Testimonies* out of the *Law* which I can apprehend to

have any *colour or appearance* of ſtrength in them, with the *examples* approved of God, that ſeem to look this way: I conſidered at our entrance into this diſcourſe.

I ſpeake of *puniſhing* in an *Arbitrary* way, for all *inſtances* produced to the *purpoſe* in hand, that ſpeak of any *puniſhment*, mention nothing under *death* it ſelfe; which yet (at leaſt in the firſt place) is not aymed at by thoſe that uſe them in our dayes as I ſuppoſe. Now ſome *Divines* of no ſmall Name, maintain, that God hath not left the *impoſition* of puniſhment in any meaſure, to the *wills* of men.

Some *Arguments* for the proofe of the former Aſſertion as layd downe, I ſhall in due place make uſe of; for the preſent, I deſire to commend to the ſerious pondering of all *Chriſtians* in generall, eſpecially of *thoſe* in Authority, theſe enſuing conſiderations.

1. That it is no *priviledge* of truth, to furniſh it's *Aſſertors*, with this perſwaſion, that the *Diſſenters* from it, ought *forceably* to be oppoſed, reſtrained, puniſhed: No *falſe Religion* ever yet in the World, did enthrone it ſelfe in the minds of men, enjoyning a *civill ſoveraignty* over the perſons of others, but it therewithall commanded them, under paine of *neglect* and *contempt* of it ſelfe, to cruſh any *underling worſhip*, that would perke up in inferiour *conſciences*.

The old *Heathens* carryed their *Gods* into the Warre (as did the *Philiſtims*, 1 *Chron.* 14. 12. and the *Iſraelites* the *Arke* with Heatheniſh ſuperſtition, 1 *Sam.* 4. 3.) to whom they aſcribed the *ſucceſſe* they obtained, and in requitall of their kindneſſe, they forced the dunghill *Deities* of the conquered Nations, to attend the tryumph of their Victorious Idols; and unleſſe they adopted them into the number of their owne Gods, all further *worſhip* to them was forbidden. Hence were theſe *inventions* among the old *Romans*, by ſpells and Enchantments to entiſe away a *Deity* from any City they beſieged, (they being as expert at the getting of a Devill, as *Tobias's Raphael*, or the preſent *Romaniſts* at his fumigation) by which means they ſhrived into the honor of having 30000 unconquered Idols (as *Varro in Auguſtine de civit. Dei.*) and deſerved worthily, that change of their Cities *Epithete*;

from

from ἐπιτομὴ οἰκουμένης, to Ἐπιτομὴ δεισιδαιμονίας, which it *justly* inheriteth to this very day. *Rabsheke's* provocation to the example of the Gods of the Nations, 2 *Kings* 18. 33, 34. and the Roman *Senats* consultation concerning the admitting of *Christ* to a place among their *Idols*, that he might have been *freely* worshipped (their consent being prevented, by his Almighty providence, who will not be enrolled among the vilest works of his most corrupted creatures) do both declare this thing.

Now not to speak of *Caine*, who seems to me, to have layd the foundation of that *cruelty*, which was afterward inserted into the Churches *Orthodoxies*, by the name of *Hæreticidium*, we find the four famous *Empires* of the World to have drunke in this *perswasion* to the utmost, of suppressing all by *force and violence*, that consented not to them, in their way of worship.

Nebuchadnezzar the *Crowne of the golden Head*, sets up a *Furnace* with an *Image*, and a *Negative* answer to that *Quæry*, doe you not serve my *Gods*, nor worship my *Image*? served to to cast the servants of the *living God*, *into the middest of the fire*, *Dan.* 3.

Daniel's casting into the *Lyons Den*, *Chap.* 6. shews that the *Persian Silver brest and armes*, did not want *Iron* hands, to crush or breake the *Opposers* of, or *dissenters* from their *Religious Edicts*.

And though we find not *much*, of the *short-lived founder* of the *Grecian* Dominion, yet what was the *practice* of the *Branches* of that *Empire*, especially in the *Syrian* and *Egiptian* sprouts, the three Books of the *Machabees*, *Josephus* and others, do abundantly manifest.

For the *Romans*, though their *Judgement* and practice, (which fully and wholly, are given over from the *Dragon* to the *Beast* and false Prophet) be written in the blood *of thousands* of Christians, and so not to be questioned, yet that it may appear, that we are not the *onely men* in this Generation, that this wisedome of *punishing dissenters* was not born with us, I shall briefly give in, what *grounds* they proceeded on, and the *motives* they had to proceed as they did.

First,

First, then, they enacted it as a *Law*, that no *religious worship* should be *admitted* or *practised*, without the *consent*, *decree*, *and establishment* of the Senate. *Mention* is made of a formall *Law* to this purpose in *Tertullian*, *Apol. cap.* 5. though now we find it not. The *foundation* of it was doubtlesse in that of the twelve *Tables*: *Separatim nemo habessit Deos, neue novos, sed ne Aduenas nisi publice ascitos privatim colunto. Let none have Gods to himselfe, neither let any privately worship new or strange Deities, unlesse they be publiquely owned and enrolled.* And that it was their *practise* and in the *counsells* of the wisest amongst them, appeares in that advice given by *Mæcenas* to *Augustus* in *Dio Cassius*: Τὸ μὲν θεῖον, παντὴ παντῶς αὐτός τε σέβου κατὰ τὰ πάτρια, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τιμᾶν ἀνάγκαζε. Τοὺς δὲ ξενίζοντας τί περὶ αὐτὸ, καὶ μίσει καὶ κόλαζε, μὴ μόνον τῶν θεῶν ἕνεκα, ὧν κατὰ φρονήσας οὐδ' ἄλλου ἄν τινος προτιμήσειεν, ἀλλ' ὅτι καινά τινα δαιμόνια οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἀντεισφέροντες πολλοὺς ἀναπείθουσιν ἀλλοτριονομεῖν. κἀκ τούτου καὶ συωμοσίαι καὶ συστάσεις, ἑταιρίαι τε γίγνονται, τὸ περ ἥκιστα μοναρχία συμφέρει. *Worship* (saith he) *the divine power thy selfe, according to the constitutions of thy Countrey, alwayes and at all times, and compell others so to honour it; not onely for the Gods sake, whom yet whoso contemneth, hee will never doe any honourable thing, but because, these (not so worshipping) introducing new Deities, doe perswade many to transgresse (or to change affaires) whence are conjurations, seditions, private societies; things no way conducing to Monarchies.*

Hence doubtlesse was that *opposition*, which *Paul* met withall in diverse of the *Roman* Territories; thus at *Athens*, (though as I suppose they enjoyed there, their owne *Lawes* and *Customes*, very suitable as it should seem to those of the *Romans*) preaching *Jesus*, he was accused to be *a setter forth of strange Gods*, *Acts* 14. for although as *Strabo* observeth of the *Athenians*, that publiquely by the Authority of the *Magistrates*, πολλὰ τῶν ξενικῶν ἱερῶν παραδέξαντο, *they received many things of forreigne worships*, yet that none might attempt any such things of themselves, is notorious from the case of *Socrates*, who as *Laertius* witnesseth, was condemned, as οὓς μὲν νομίζει θεοὺς ἡ πόλις οὐ νομίζοντα, ἕτερα δὲ καινὰ δαιμόνια εἰσηγούμενον,

ἀνηγμένον. *one who thought not those to be Gods, whom the City thought so to be, but brought in certaine new Deities.* Hence I say was *Pauls* opposition, and his haling to *Mars hill*: Without doubt also, this was the *bottome* of that *stirre* and trouble he met withall about *Philippi*. It is true, private *Interest* lay in the bottome with the chiefe *Opposers*, but this Legall *Constitution* was that which was plausibly pretended. *Acts* 16. 21. *They teach customes, which are not Lawfull for us to receive, neither to observe being Romans.* οὐκ ἔξεστι Ῥωμαίοις, it is not *lawfull* for us *Romans* to receive the *Religion* they hold out, because *Statutes* are made amongst us against all *Religious worship* not allowed by publique Authority. Let *Calvin's* short Annotation on that place be seen. *Gallio's* refusing to judge between *Jewes* (as he thought) in a *Jewish* controversie, is no *impeachment* of this truth: had it been about any *Roman* establishment, he would quickly have interposed. Now this Law amongst them was doubtlesse, *Fundi Christiani Calamitas.*

This then in the *first place* was Enacted, that no *worship* should be admitted, no *Religion* exercised, but what received *Establishment* and Approbation from them, who supposed themselves, to be intrusted with *Authority* over men in such things. And this power of the *Dragon* was given over to the *Beast* and false *Prophet*. The *Anti-christian* power, succeeding into the room of the *Paganish*, the *Pope* and Counsels of the *Emperours* and Senate, it was quickly confirmed that none should be suffered to live *in peace*, who received not his *marke* and name, *Revel.* 13. 16, 17. Wherunto for my part, I cannot but referre, very many of those following *Imperiall Constitutions*, which were made at first against the opposers of the Churches *Orthodoxisme*, but were turned against the *witnesse of Jesus* in the close.

2. This being done, they held out the *Reasons* of this Establishment. I shall touch only *one*, or *two*, of them, which are still *common to* them, who walke in the same paths with them.

Now the first was, that *Toleration* of sundry ways of *worship*, and *severall Religions* tends to the disturbance of the *Commonwealth*,

wealth, and that civill Society, which *men* under the ſame Government doe, and ought to enjoy. So *Cicero* tels us, *Lib. 2. de legibus*: *Suos Deos, aut novos, aut alienigenas coli, confuſionem habet*, & it brings in *confuſion* of Religion, and civill Society. The ſame is clearly held out; in that Counſell of *Mæcenas* to *Auguſtus* before mentioned. *They* (ſaith he) *who introduce new Deities, draw many into Innovations, whence are Conſpiracies, Seditions, Conventicles, no way profitable for the Common wealth.*

Their other maine *Reaſon* was, that hereby the *Gods*, whom they owned and worſhipped, were *diſhonoured* and provoked *to plague* them. That this was continually in their mouths and clamours, all the *Acts* at the ſlaying of the *Martyrs*, the Reſcripts of Emperours, the Apologies of the Chriſtians, as *Tertullian*, *Juſtine Martyr*, *Arnobius*, *Minutius Felix*, doe abundantly teſtifie. All *trouble* was ſtill aſcribed to their Impiety, upon the firſt breaking out of any judgment, as though the cauſe of it had been the *Toleration* of Chriſtians, preſently the *vulgar cry* was, *Chriſtianos ad Leones*. Now that thoſe cauſes and *reaſons*, have been traduced to all thoſe, who have ſince acted the ſame things, eſpecially to the *Emperours ſucceſſor at Rome*, needs not to be proved: With the *power* of the *Dragon*, the *wiſedome* alſo is derived; ſee that great Champion *Cardinall Bellarmine*, fighting with theſe very weapons: *Lib. de Laicis. cap.* 21. And indeed, however illuſtrated, improved, adorned, ſupported, flouriſhed, & ſweetned they are the *ſum* of all that to this day hath been ſaid in the ſame caſe.

3. Having made a *Law*, and ſupported it with ſuch *reaſons* as theſe, in proceeding to the Execution of the *penalty* of that Law, as to particular Perſons (which *penalty* being as now, *Arbitrary* was inflicted, unto Baniſhment, Impriſonment, Mine-digging, Torturing in ſundry kinds, Mayming, Death, according to the *pleaſure* of the Judges) they always *charged* upon thoſe perſons, not onely the denying and oppoſing their owne *Deities*, Religion, and Worſhip, but alſo, that, *that* which they embraced, was *fooliſh*, *abſurd*, *deteſtable*, *pernitious*, *ſinfull*, *wicked*, *ruinous* to *Common wealths*, Cities, Society, Families, honeſty, order, and the like. If a man ſhould

Profana illic omnia quæ apud nos ſacra rurſum conceſſa apud illos quæ nobis inceſta.

goe

goe about to delineat *Christian Religion*, by the *Lines* and features drawne thereof, in the invectives and accusations of their *Adversaries*, he might justly suppose, that indeed, that was their God, which was set up at *Rome* with this Inscription, DEUS CHRISTIANORUM ONONYCHITES. *Being an Image with Asses eares, in a Gowne, Clawes or Talons upon one foot, with a Booke in his hand.* Charged they were, that they worshipped an *Asses* head, which *impious folly*, first fastened on the Jews by *Tacitus. Histor. lib.* 5. *cap.* 1. (in these words, *Effigiem animalis quo monstrante, errorem sitimque depulerant penetrali sacravere*, having before set out a faigned direction received by a company of Asses) which he had borrowed from *Appion* a rayling *Egiptian* of *Alexandria* (*Joseph. ad. App. lib.* 1.) was so ingrafted in their minds, that no *defensative* could be allowed. The Sun, the Crosse, *Sacerdotis Genitalia*, were either *really* supposed, or *impiously* imposed on them, as the objects of their worship. The *blood* and *flesh* of Infants, at *Thiestæan* banquets, was said to be their food and provision: promiscuous lust, with *Incest*, their chiefest *refreshment*. Such as *these* it concerned them, to have them *thought to be*, being resolved to use them, as if they *were so indeed*: Hence I am not sometimes without some *suspition*, that many of the impure *abhominations*, follies, villanies, which are ascribed unto the *Primative Hereticks*, yea the very *Gnosticks* themselves (upon whom the filth that lyes, is beyond all possible beliefe, *Epiphan. Tom.* 2. *lib.* 1. *Har.* 26.) might be fained, and imposed, as to a *great part* thereof. For though not the *very same*, yet things *as fooliſh* and opposite to the *light* of nature, were at the same time, charged on the most *Orthodox*.

Moses novos Ritus contrariosque cæteris mortalibus indidit. Provectissima ad libidinem gens alienarum concubitum abstenint, inter se nihil illicitum. Tacitus, de Judæis Hist. l. 5. *Judeos impulsore Chresto quotidie tumultuantes, Roma expulit:* fasly and fooliſhly, *Suet. Claud. cap.* 25. *Quæsitissimis pœnis afficiebat, quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. Plu. Tac. An. lib.* 15. *afflicti supplicis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novæ ac Maleficæ: Sueton. in Nerone: cap.* 16.

But you will say, they who charged *these things* upon the *Catholicks*, were *Pagans*, enemies of God, and Christ; but these who so charged *Hereticks* were *Christians* themselves: And so, say I *also*, and therefore for *reverence* of the name, (though perhaps I could) I say no more. But yet this I say, that Story which you have in *Minutius Felix*, or *Arnobius* 8th. Book *Apologeticall, of the meeting of Christians, the drawing away of the Light by a Dogge tyed to the Candlestick, so to*

make way for Adulteries and Inceſts: I have heard more then once, told with no ſmall confidence, of *Browniſts* and *Puritans*. Hath not this very ſame *courſe* been taken in latter ages? Conſult the Writings of *Waldenſis*, and the reſt of his Companions, about *Wickleffe* and his Followers, ſee the occaſion of his falling off from *Rome*, in our owne Chronicles, in *Fabian* of old, yea and *Daniel* of late to gratifie a *Popiſh* Court; of *Eckius*, *Hoſius*, *Staphylus*, *Bolſecke*, *Bellarmine*, and the reſt who have undertaken to pourtray out unto us, *Luther* and *Calvin* with their followers; and you will quickly ſee, that their great *deſigne* was to put (as they did upon the head of *John Huſs* at the Councell of *Conſtance*, when he was lead to the ſtake) the ugly vizard, of ſome *Deviliſh* Appearance, that under *that forme*, they might fit them for *Fire* and Fagot.

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And herein alſo, is the *Politie* of the *Dragon*, derived to the falſe *Prophet*, and a *colour* tempered, for perſecutors to imbrue their *hands* in the blood of Martyrs.

This was the old *Roman* Way, and I thought it not amiſſe to cautionate thoſe, enjoying *Truth and Authority*, that if it be poſſible, they may not walke in their *ſteps* and method: the courſe accounted ſo *ſoveraigne*, for the extirpation of *Errour*, was as you ſee, firſt invented, for the extirpation of *Truth*.

Secondly, I deſire it may be obſerved, That the generall *Iſſue* and tendance of unlimited *arbitrary perſecution* or puniſhing for conſcience ſake, becauſe in all Ages οἱ πλείονες πονηροί, and the *worſt* of men have ſate at the upper *end* of the World, for the moſt part, more *falſe Worſhippers*, having hitherto enjoyed *authority* over others, then *Followers* of the Lambe, hath been *pernicious*, *fatall*, *and dreadfull* to the Profeſſion and *Profeſſors* of the Goſpel, little, or not at all, ſerviceable to the *truth*.

I have heard it averred, by a *Reverend and Learned* Perſonage, that more *blood* of *Heretieks* hath been ſhed by wholeſome *Severity*, in the maintenance of the *truth* and oppoſition unto *Errors*, then hath been ſhed of the *witneſſes of Jeſus*, by the Sword of Perſecution, in the hands of *Heretieks* and falſe

falſe Worſhippers. An *aſſertion*, I conceive, under favour, ſo exceedingly diſtant from the *reality* of the thing it ſelfe, that I dare take upon me, againſt any man breathing, that in ſundry Chriſtian *Provinces*, almoſt in every one of the *Weſt*, more *Lives* have been ſacrificed to the one Idoll *Hæreticidium*, of thoſe that bear witneſſe to the Truth, in the *Beleife*, for which they ſuffered, then all the *Hereticks* properly ſo called, that ever were ſlaine in all the *Provinces* of the World, by men profeſſing the Goſpell: And I ſhall give that worthy *Divine*, or any other of his perſwaſion, his *Option*, among all the chiefeſt *Provinces* of *Europe*, to tye me up unto which they pleaſe. He that ſhall conſider that above *ſixty thouſand perſons*, were in ſix yeares or little more, cut off in a *Judiciall way*, by *Duke D' Alua* in the *Nether-Lands*, in purſuite of the ſentence of the *Inquiſition*, will conclude, that there is *Cauſa facilis* in my hand.

The Ancient Conteſt, betweene the *Homoouſians* and the *Arrians*, the firſt Controverſie the *Churches* were agitated withall, after they enjoyed a Chriſtian *Magiſtrate* (and may juſtly be ſuppoſed to be carryed on to the *advantage* of *Error*, beyond *all* that went before it, becauſe of the *Civill Magiſtrates* intereſſing themſelves in the Quarrell) was not carryed out to Violence and *Blood*, before the *ſeverall* perſwaſions, lighted on *ſeverall* Dominions, and State Intereſts: As between the *Goths*, *Vandals*, and the reſt of their Companions on one ſide, who were *Arrians*, and the *Romans* on the other. In all whoſe *Bickerings* notwithſtanding, the *honour of Severity*, did ſtill attend the *Arrians*, eſpecially in *Affricke*, where they perſecuted *the Catholicks*, with horrible outrage and fury. Five thouſand at one time barbarouſly expoſed to all manner of cruell Villany. Some Eruptions of *paſſion* had been before among *Emperours* themſelves, but ſtill with this difference, that they who *Arrianized*, carryed the Bell for zeale againſt diſſenters. Witneſſe *Valens*, who gave place in perſecution, to none of his *Pagan* Predeceſſors; killing, burning, flaying, making havock of all Orthodox Profeſſors: Yea perhaps, that which he did, at leaſt was done by the countenance of his *Authority*, at *Alexandria* upon the

placing in, of *Lucius* an *Arrian* in the roome of *Athanasius*, thrusting *Peter* beſides the Chaire, who was rightly placed according to the cuſtome of thoſe times, perhaps I ſay, the Tumults, Rapes, Murders, *then*, and *there* acted, did outgoe what before had been done by the *Pagans*, ſee *Theodorit*, *Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib.* 4. *cap.* 22. it were tedious to purſue the *lying*, *ſlandering*, *invectives*, *baniſhments*, *deaths*, *tumults*, *murders*, which attend this *counſell* all along, after once they began to invoke the help of the *Emperours* one againſt another: Yet in this ſpace ſome *Magiſtrates*, weary with perſecuting wayes, did not only abſtaine *practically* from force and violence, as moſt of the Orthodox *Emperours* did, but alſo enacted Laws, for the freedome of ſuch as diſſented from them. *Jovianus* a pious man, grants all peace, that will be peacable; offended *onely* with them, who would offer *violence* to others. *Socrates Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib.* 4. *cap.* 21. *Gratianus* makes a Law, whereby he granted *liberty* to all Sects. but *Manichees*, *Photinians*, and *Eunomians*. *Zozo. Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib.* 7. *cap.* 1. Many more the like *examples* might be produced.

The next *difference* about the Worſhip of God (to the *Arrian* and its Branches) that was controverted in *Letters* of *blood*, was about *Images*, and their Worſhip; in which, though ſome furious *Princes*, in oppoſition to that growing *Idolatry*, which by *Popes*, *Biſhops*, *Prieſts*, and eſpecially *Monkes*, was in thoſe dayes, violently urged, did mingle ſome of their *blood* with their *Sacrifices*, yet not to the Tithe almoſt, of what the *Iconolatræ* getting uppermoſt, returned vpon them, and their adherents.

This if *occaſion* were, might be eaſily demonſtrated from *Paulus Diaconus* and others. After this, from about the year 850. about which time the *Iconolatræ*, having enſnared the *Weſt by politie*, the poſterity of *Charles* the Great, who had ſtoutly oppoſed the *worſhip of Images*, complying with the *Popes*, the Fathers of that *Worſhip* for their owne ends, and wearied the *Eaſt by cruelty*, that *Conteſt* growing towards an *End*, the whole power of puniſhing for *Religion*, became ſubſervient to the *Dictates* of the *Pope*, the Kings of the Earth giving their power to the *Beaſt*, (unto which *point* things had been

been working all along) from thence I say, untill the death of *Servetus* in *Geneva*, the pursuit of *Gentilis Blandeata*, and some other mad men in *Helvetia*, for the space well nigh of 700 yeares, the chiefest season of the Reigne of *Sathan* and *Antichrist*, all punishing for Religion, was managed by the Authority of *Rome*, and against the *poore witnesses of Jesus*, prophecying in sackcloth, in the severall Regions of the *West*. And what *streames* of *blood* were poured out, what *Millions* of *Martyrs* slaine in that space, is knowne to all. Hence *Bellarmine* boasteth that the *Albigenses* were extinguished by the Sword. *De Laic. cap.* 22. It is true there were Lawes enacted of old by *Theodosius*, *Valentinian*, *Martian*, as *C. de hæreticis*, L. *Manichæis*, L. *Arriani*. L. *Unicuique*; which last provideth for the death of Seducers, but yet truely, though they were made by *Catholicks*, and in the favour of Catholicks, yet considering to what *end* they were used, I can look upon them no otherwise, but as very bottome stones of the Tower of *Babel*.

This, then in its *Latitude* proving so *pernicious* to the profession of the Gospell, having for so long driven the *Womm into the Wilderneſſe*, and truth into corners, being the maine *Engine* whereby the Tower of *Babel* was built, and that, which at this day they cry *Grace* unto, as the foundation stone of the whole *Antichristian* Fabrick (see *Becanus de fide hæreticis servanda*, *Bell. de Laicis*, *&c.*) we had need be cautious, what use we make (as one tearmes it well) of the *Broome* of *Antichrist*, to *sweep* the Church of Christ. Whither that *wee* are in the *Truth*, and *they* blinded with *Error*, of whom wee have spoken, be a sufficient *Plea*, we shall see anon. In the meane time, we may doe well to remember, what *Lewes* the twelfth of *France* said, yea swore concerning the Inhabitants of *Mirindoll*, whom by the instigation of *his Prelates* he had ordered to be slaine, when newes was brought him, what was their conversation and way of life, *Let them be Hereticks if you please* (saith he) *but assuredly they are better then me, and my Catholicks*. Take heed least the punished, be better then the punishers.

Let me add to this Observation onely *this*, that the attempt

tempt to suppresse any *Opinions* whatsoever by *Force*, hath been for the most part fruitlesse; for either some *few particular persons*, are proceeded against, or else greater *multitudes*: If some *particulars* only, the *Ashes* of one, hath always proved the seed of many Opinionatists: Examples are innumerable, take one, which is boasted of, as a *patterne* of severity taken from Antiquity. About the yeare 390. *Priscillianus*, *a Manichee*, *and a Gnosticke*, by the procurement of *Ithacius and Idacius*, two *Bishops*, was put to death by *Maximus*, an usurping Emperour, who ruled for a season, having slaine *Gratianus*; (as that kind of men, would always close with any *Authority*, that might serve their owne Ends.) Now what was the issue thereof; *Martinus* a Catholick Bishop renounces their Communion who did it: The *Historian*, that reports it, giving this censure of the whole, *Sic pessimo exemplo, sublati sunt homines luce indignissimi*, though the men (*Priscillian and his Companions*) were most *unworthy* to live, yet their sentence to death, was most *unjust*. But no matter for this, was not the Heresie suppressed thereby? See what the same *Historian*, who wrote not long after, and was able to testifie the event, sayes of it (it is *Severus Sulpitius*, *lib.* 2. *Eccles. Hist.*) *Non solum non repressa est hæresis* (sayes he) *sed confirmata*, *& latius propagata est*, *&c.* The *heresie* was so farre from being *suppressed* hereby, that it was *confirmed* and propagated: His followers who before *honoured* him as a *Saint*, now *adore* him as a *Martyr*: The like in all Ages hath been the issue, of the *like* indeavours.

But now, if this course be undertaken against *Multitudes*, what is or hath been the usuall End of such undertakings? Take some examples of late dayes: *Charles* the fifth, the most mighty *Emperour of Germany*, undertakes by violence to extirpate the *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* out of the Empire. After a tedious *Warre*, the *death* of many thousands, the *wasting* of the Nation, in the close of all, himselfe is driven out of *Germany*; and the businesse left much where it begun: *Sleid. Com. Philip of Spaine* will needs force the *Inquisition* upon the *Netherlands*? What is the issue? After the *expence* of an Ocean of blood, and more *Coyne* then would have purchased the

the *Countrey* twice over, his *Posterity* is totally deprived of all *Sovereignty* over those *Parts*.

Patrick Hamilton, and *George Wishard* are put to death in *Scotland*, by the procurement of a *Cardinall*; the *Cardinall* is instantly murthered by some desperate young men, and a *war* raised there about *Religion*, which was never well quieted, untill having hunted their *Queene* out of her native Kingdome, she had her head chopt off in *England*: *History of Reformation in Scotland*. The *Warres*, *Seditions*, *Tumults*, *Murders*, *Massacres*, *Rapes*, *Burnings*, &c. that followed the same attempt in *France*, cannot be thought of, without *horror* and detestation. Neither knew those things any *End*, untill the present *forbearance*, was granted. *Instances* might be multiplyed, but these things are knowne to all. If any shall say, all these Evils followed, the attempting to suppresse Truth not Errour, I shall answer him another time, being loath to doe it, unlesse compelled: Onely for the *present* I shall say, that *Errour* hath as much right, to a forceable defence, as *Truth*.

6. To *stirre* us up yet further, to a serious consideration of the *grounds* and *reasons* which are laid downe, for the inflicting of *punishment* upon any, for Exorbitancies in things of Religion (upon what hath been said) the perpetuall *coincidence* of the *causes* by them held forth, who pretend to plead for *just severity*, with their *pretences* who have acted *unjust* persecution, would be well heeded.

The *Position* is laid downe in Generall on both sides, that *Erring persons are so, and so, to be dealt withall*. That *such* is the power and duty of the Magistrate in *such* cases. The *definition* of Heresie is agreed on for the maine; onely the *Papists* place the *Churches determination*, where others thrust in the Heretickes conviction (a thing much more obscure to bystanders and *Judges* also.) The appellations wherewith *truth* persecuted, and *error* pursued, are cloathed, still the same. The *consequents* urged on all sides, of *dishonour* to God, *trouble* to the State, and the like not at all discrepant. The *arguments* for the one, and other, for the most part the same. Looke what *Reasons* one Sect gives for the punishing of another,

ther, the names being changed are retorted. He *blaſpheme th* to the *Hereticke*, who chargeth *blaſphemy* upon him. Wee uſe no other *Arguments*, cite no other *Texts*, preſſe no other conſequencies for the puniſhing of other *Hereticks*, then the *Papiſts* the wiſeſt *Hereticks* breathing, doe for the *puniſhment* of us.

No *colour*, no *pretence*, but hath been equally uſed in all hands: None can ſay, this is mine. To *Luthers* objection, that the Church of Chriſt never burned an *Hereticke*, for *Huſſe*, and *Hierome* were none; *Bellarmine* anſwers, they were *Hereticks* to them *Catholicks*, which did ſuffice: *de Laic. cap.* 21. And indeed this *Viciſſitude* of things is very *pernitious*. All Chriſtians almoſt are *Hereticks* to ſome enjoying *Authority*: (as *Salvian* ſaid the caſe was, between the *Homoouſians* and *Arrians* in his time) and moſt of thoſe enjoying *authority*, are perſwaded it is their duty, to ſuppreſſe them whom they account *Hereticks*; and anſwerably have more or leſſe acted, according to this perſwaſion, untill by blood, Wars, and horrid *devaſtations* of Nations, ſome of them have been wearied: From the firſt *Cerayſado* againſt the *Albigenſes*, through the Warre of the *Huſſites* under *Ziſca* and the *Procopij*, thoſe dreadfull Maſſacres, before recounted, what a ſtage of blood, hath *Europe* been made upon this account? I deſire that to this *point* the Declaration of the *Netherlands*, at the beginning of their Troubles (whom *Bellarmine* affirmes to have Petitioned for Liberty of Conſcience, as he was writing *de Hæreticidio*, the thing being long before granted at *Spira*, at the Convention of the States of the *Empire*, in the yeare 1526.) may be ſeriouſly conſidered.

7. For the *neceſſity* of courſes of *extremity*, againſt *erronious* Perſons, for the upholding the *Faith* once delivered to the Saints, and the keeping the *Churches* in peace, it doth not appeare to me to be ſo urgent as is pretended; for three hundred years, the Church had no aſſiſtance from any Magiſtrate againſt *Hereticks*: and yet in all that ſpace, there was not one *long-lived*, or farre-ſpreading Hereſie in compariſon of *thoſe* that followed. As the *diſeaſe* is ſpirituall, ſo was the *remedy* which in thoſe dayes was applyed; and the Lord

Jeſus

Jesus Christ, made it effectuall. The Christians also of those dayes, *disclaimed* all thoughts of such proceedings. The *expressions* of the most Antient, as *Policarpus*, *Ignatius*, *Irenæus*, concerning *Heretickes* are sharpe and cutting: Their *avoyding* of them being *admonished*, precise and severe; their *confutations* of them, laborious and diligent; their *Church censures*, and Ejections, peircing and sharpe: *Communion amongst the Churches*, close, exact, and carefully preserved; so that a stubborne *Heretick* was thrust out of Christian society. But for *corporall punishments* to be inflicted on them, in their writings, not a syllable. Untill *Augustine* was changed from his first resolution and perswasion, by the madnesse of *Donatisticall Circumcellions*, this Doctrine had poore footing in Antiquity. And whether his reasons as to this *point* be convincing, let any impartiall man, read his *Epistle* 50, and determine. What some say, the *Christians* would have been of another minde, had they injoyed *Christian Magistrates*, is so suited to our present *frame* and *temper*, but so unworthy of them, that I should wrong them by a Defensative. What was their sense of them in a spirituall way is cleare. *John* they say would not abide in a *Bath*, where *Cerinthus* the Heretick, infected with *Judaisme* and *Paganisme* was; saying, let us depart lest the building fall on us, where *Cerinthus* is: *Iræn. lib. 3. cap. 3. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 25. Marcion* meeting *Polycarpus*, and asking him whether he *knew him or acknowledged him*, his answer was, Yea, *to be the first borne of the Devill*, *Euseb. lib. 4. cap. 14. Ignatius* his Epistles are full of the like expressions. *Iræneus* sayes, he would have no words with them, *lib. 3. cap. 3. Tertullians* Books testifie for him at large, with what keennesse of spirit he pursued the *Heretickes* of his dayes (though before the *End* of them; he had the unhappinesse to be almost one himself.) *Cyprian* cryes out, *Nulla cum talibus convivia, nulla colloquia, nulla commercia misceantur: Epist. 3. ad Cornel. Neither eate, nor talke, nor deale with them.* *Antonius* the *Hermit* leaves Testimony when he was dying, *That he never had peaceable conference with them all his dayes*, *Vita Anton. inter Oper. Athan.* Surely, had these men perceived the minde of God for their *Bodily punishment*, they would not have failed

to signifie their minds therein; but truly their expressions hold out rather the quite contrary. Τὸς μισητὰς ὁ θεὸς, μισεῖν χρὴ ὑμᾶς, καὶ ὅπλα τοῖς ἐχθροῖς αὐτῶν ἐκτίνειν· ἓν μὲν καὶ τοῦτο αὐτὸς καὶ διδάσκειν, ἐφ' ὅσον τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεὸν καὶ Θεὸν, ἀνωφελῶς μὲν μισοῦσι καὶ χαίρουσιν αὐτῶν: says *Ignatius*, Epist. ad Philad. *Count them enemies and separate from them*, but for *beating* or *persecuting* them, that is proper to the *Heathen* who know not God, nor our Saviour, doe not you so. *Tertullian* in very many places, layes downe *generall maximes* tending to more Liberty then is now pleaded for; one or two places may be pointed at. *Videte ne & hoc ad irreligiositatis elogium concurrat, adimere libertatem religionis, & interdicere Optionem divinitatis, ut non liceat mihi colere quem velim, sed cogar colere quem nolim. Nemo se ab invito coli vellet, ne homo quidem:* Apol. cap 23. And againe to *Scapula* the *Governour* of Carthage to dissuade him from the *Persecution* he intended. *Tamen humani juris & naturalis potestatis est unicuique quod putaverit colere: nec alii obest aut prodest alterius Religio: sed nec Religionis est, cogere Religionem, quæ sponte, suscipi debeat, non vi; cum & hostiæ ab animo libenti expostulentur; ita & si nos compuleritis ad sacrificandum, nihil præstabitis deis vestris, ab invitis enim sacrificia non desiderabunt.* And I desire to know, whether that which he maketh to be the *Plea* of Christians, may not also be used by all *erring* persons. *Totum quod in nos potestis, nostrum est Arbitrium. Certe si velim, Christianus sum, tunc ergo me damnabis si damnari velim. Cum vero quod in me potes, nisi velim, non potes, jam meæ voluntatis est quod potes, non tuæ potestatis.* Apol. cap. ult. Hence was that *Quære* of *Lactantius*: *Quis imponet mihi necessitatem aut credendi quod nolim, aut quod velim non credendi:* And long after these *Gregory* of Rome, *Lib.* 2. *Ep.* 52. tells us, *Nova & inaudita est ista prædicatio, quæ verberibus exigit fidem:* To beate in Faith with stripes, was then, a new Kinde of Preaching. *These* and the like, were their Expressions.

It is true, in the three first *Centuries*, many fond, foolish, corrupt Opinions, were broached by sundry *brain-sick men*; but they had little hold of the Churches, kept themselves in the *breasts* of some few disorderly *Wanderers*, and did very little

little promote the Mysterie of Iniquity: But afterwards, when the *Roman Emperours*, and the *Great men of the Earth*, under, and with them, began to interpose in the things of Religion, and were mutually *woed*, instigated, and provoked by the *Parties* at variance (as indeed it is a shame to consider upon all *meetings*, *assemblies*, *disputes councels*, what running, what flattering, what insinuation at Court were used on all hands) what Roote did diverse Heresies take (how farre were they propagated? Witnesse *Arrianisme*, which had almost invaded the whole World.

Furthermore, by the wayes which were invented *oft from the Rule*, for the extirpation of Errors, when by the Instigation of *Prelates*, the *Emperours* were, (to their owne ruin) perswaded to them, *the Man of sinne* walked to his Throne. Those very *Lawes*, *Edicts*, and *Declarations*, which were obtained against erring Persons, did the *Bishops of Rome* invert and use against all the Witnesses of Jesus. The *Devill* durst not be so bold, as to imploy that his grand *Agent* in his *Apprentiship* against the *Saints*: But he first suffers him, to *exercise his hand* against *Heteticks*, intending to make use of him afterwards to another purpose. In most of those contests, which the *Roman Pontists* had with their fellow *Bishops*, by which they insensibly advanced their owne supremacy, it was the defence of Catholicks they undertooke, as in the case of *Athanasius* and others.

Neither did the Christians of old, at *once*, steppe into the perswasion of punishing *corporeally* in case of Religion. *Constantine* makes a Decree at first, Τὴν ἐλευθερίαν θρησκείας οὐκ ἀρνατέαν εἶναι, *that Liberty of worship is not to be denyed, and therefore the Christians as others, should have Liberty to keep the faith of their Religion and heresie*, *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib.* 10. *cap.* 5. And in the same *Edict* he saith (how truely I know not, but yet *Great Constantine* said it) *That it is most certaine, that this is conducing to the peace of the Empire, that free Option and choyce of Religion be left to all.* Afterwards, when he begun a little further to ingage himselfe in the businesse of Religion, being indeed wearied with the Petitions of *Bishops* and their *Associates*, for the *persecution* of one another, what *troubles* in a

few yeares did he intricate himselfe withall, perplexed he was in his spirit to see the untoward revengefulnesse of that sort of people; insomuch that he *writes* expressly to them, being assembled in *Counsell* at *Tyre*, *That they had neither care of the truth, nor love to peace, nor conscience of scandall, nor would by any meanes be prevailed on to lay downe their malice and animosities*; *Socrat. Hist. lib.* 1. *cap.* 22. At length an *Arrian* Priest curryes favour with his Sister *Constantia*: Shee gets him into the *Esteeme* of her Brother; after some insinuations of his, new *Edicts*, new *Synods*, new recallings, new *Banishments* of other persons, follow one upon the neck of another. *Ruffin. Eccles. Hist. lib.* 1. *cap.* 11. And when this knack was once found out, of promoting a *Sect* by *Imperiall* favour, it is admirable to consider how those good Princes, *Constantine* and his Sonnes, were abused, misled, inraged, ingaged into mutuall Dissensions, by the Lyes, flatteries, *equivocations* of such as called themselves *Bishops*, *Ruff. lib.* 1. *cap.* 15, 16, *&c.* As also how soone with the many, the whole businesse of *Religion* was hereupon turned into a matter, of externall Pompe and Dominion. But it is besides my purpose, to raise into that *Hell of confusion*, which by this meanes, brake in upon the Churches in succeeding Ages. Onely, for the following *Imperiall* Edicts and Constitutions in the behalfe of the *faith Catholicke*, and for the punishing of Erring Persons, I desire to observe,

1. That the *Emperours* were stirred up to them, by *Turbulent Priests*, and aspiring Prelates; let the Popes letters to them witnesse this, *Leo Epist.* 75, *&c.*

2. That they were still *bottomed*, upon such, and such, *counsells*, that were not to be opposed or spoken against, when all of them were spent for the most part, about things quite besides and beyond the Scripture (as *feastings*, *and fastings*, *and Bishops jurisdictions*) and some of them, were the very *ulcers*, and *impostumations* of *Christian Religion*, as those of *Nice* and *Ephesus*, both the second; and in generall all of them the *Sea*, upon which the Whore exalted her *seat* and throne; and these things did those good men, either deceived by the craft of *Hereticks*, or wearied by the importunity of the *Orthodox*.

And

And yet notwithstanding all this (as I shall afterwards declare) I cannot close with that counsell which *Themistius* a Philosopher gave to *Valens* the Emperour, and am most abhorrent from the Reason of his Counsell, *viz. That he should let all Sects alone, because it was for the glory of God, to bee honoured with diversities of Opinions, and wayes of Worship*: Yet though this Reason be false and *impious*, yet the advise it selfe was well *conducing* at that time, to the peace of the Churches, something qualifying the spirit of that *Hereticall Emperour*, who before had cruelly raged, against all Orthodox professors of the Deity of Christ, *Socrat. lib. 4. cap. 27.*

8. Lastly, add unto all that hath been said (*vice coronidis*) for the use of such as injoying *Authority*, may have misapprehensions of some *truths* of Christ, a sad consideration concerning the *End and Issue*, which the Lord in his righteous Judgement hath in all Ages given to *Persecutors* and *Persecution*. *Nero* (of whom sayes *Tertullian*, *tali Dedicatore gaudet sanguis Christianus*) who was the *first* that imployed the *Sword* against our Religion, being condemned by the Senate to be punished *More Majorum*, slew himselfe with this exprobration of his owne sordid Villany, *Turpiter vixi, turpius Morior*: *Sueton. in Nero*: *Domitian* the inheritor of his *rage* and folly, murdered in his owne House, by his Servants, *Idem in Domit. Trajan* by a *resolution* of his Joynts, nummednesse of body, and a choaking Water, perished miserably, *Dion Cassius de Tra.* This is he whose *order* not to seeke out *Christians* to punishment, but yet to punish them appearing, you have in his Epistle to *Plinie* a provinciall Governour under him, *Plin. Epist. 97.* which though commended by *Eusebius*, *Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 30.* yet is canvassed by *Tertullian*, as a foolish, impious, wicked Constitution, *Apol. cap. 2. Hadrian* perishing, with a *Flux* and casting of *blood*, payd some part of the price of the Innocent *blood* which hee had shed, *Ælius Spart. in Had. Severus* poysoned himselfe, to put an end to his tormenting paines, *Jul. Capitol. Maximinus*, with his Sonne yet a Child, was torne in pieces of the *Souldiers*, all crying out, *That not a whelpe was to be left of so cursed a stock*. *Decius* having reigned scarce two yeares, was slaine with

with his Children, *Euseb. lib. 7. cap. 1. Valerian* being taken by *Sapores* King of *Persia*, was carryed about in a Cage, and being 70 yeares old, was at length *flayed* alive, *Euseb. lib. 7. cap. 9.* Another *Valerian*, of the same stampe, with his *Brother* and Kindred, was murdered at *Millan*. *Diocletian* being smitten with madnesse, had his *Pallace* consumed with fire from Heaven, and perished miserably. The City of *Alexandria* in the time of *Gallienus*, was for its persecution, so wasted with variety of destroying *Plagues and Judgements*, that the *whole number* of its Inhabitants, answered not the *Gray-headed* old men that were in it before, *Dionis. apud Euseb. lib. 7. cap. 20.* What was the End of *Julian*, is knowne to all. Now truely of many of these, we might well say (as one of old did) *Quales Imperatores?* as *Trajan*, *Hadrian*, *Severus*, *Julian*, what excellent *Emperours* had they been, had they not been *Persecutors*. And all this sayes *Tertullian* is come to passe, that men might learne, μὴ στομαχεῖν. He that desires to see more of this, let him consule, *Tertull. Apol.* & *ad Scap. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 21. August. de civit. Dei, lib. 18. cap. 52. Eutrop. lib. 8.* It would be tedious to descend to examples of latter Ages, our owne and the neighbour Nations, do so much, too much abound with them; let this that hath been spoken suffice, to cautionate *mortall* men, how they *meddle* with the *Vessels* of the Sanctuary.

Ob. But now, may some say, What will be the Issue of this discourse; doe you then leave every one at *Liberty* in the things of God? Hath the *Magistrate* nothing to doe, in, or about Religion? Is he to depose the *care* thereof? Shall men *exasperated* in their spirits by *different perswasions*, be suffered to devoure one another as they please? *&c.*

Ans. I have onely shewed the *weaknesse* of those grounds, which *some men* make the bottome of their Testimonies, against the *toleration* of any thing but what themselves conceive to be Truth; as also taken away the *chiefe* of those Arguments, upon which, *such* a proceeding against *Erring Persons* is bottomed, as tends to *blood* and death: What positively the *Civill Magistrate*, may, nay ought to doe, in the *whole businesse*

of

of Religion, comes in the next place to be considered, being the third and last part of our discourse: Now my thoughts unto this, I shall hold out under these three heads.

1. What, is the Magistrates duty, as to the *truth*, and *persons professing it*.

2. What, in reference to the *Opposers and Revilers of it*.

3. What, in respect of *Dissenters from it*.

And I shall begin with the *first*, which to me, is much of chiefest importance.

His *power*, or rather his *duty* herein, I shall hold out in these ensuing *Propositions*.

1. As all men in Generall, so *Magistrates*, even as *such*, are bound to know the *minde* and *will* of God, in the things which concerne his Honour and Worship. They are *bound* I say, to know it. This *obligation* lyes upon all *creatures*, capable of knowing the *Creatour*, answerably to that *light*, which of him they have, and the meanes of *Revelation* which they doe enjoy. He of whom we speake, is supposed to have that *most Soveraigne and supreme* of all outward Teachings, *the Word of God*, with such other *helpes*, as are *thereby* revealed, and therein appointed. So as he is *bound* to know the will of God, in every thing him concerning; wherein he failes, and comes short of the *truth*, it is his *sinne*; the *defect* being not in the *manner* of the Revelation, but in the *corruption* of his darkened mind. Now that he is to make this *inquiry*, in reference to his *calling*, is evident from that of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 3. *He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the feare of the Lord*. This *feare* is onely taught by the *Word*. Without a *right knowledge* of God and his mind, there can be no *true feare* of him. That command also, for the *Jewish Magistrate*, to *study it day and night*, and to have the *Booke of the Law* continually before him, because it was the Rule of that civill *Politie*, whereof he was under God the head and preserver, by *Analogy* confirmeth this truth, *Deut.* 18.

2. If he desire this *wisedome* sincerely, and the Lord intend him, *as a light of the mornings, as a rising Sun, a morning without clouds*, to his people, doubtlesse he will reveale himselfe to him, and teach him his mind, as he did *David* and *Solo-*

mon, and other holy men of Old. And as to this, I shall onely with due *reverence*, cautionate the ſonnes of men, that are exalted in *Government* over their Brethren, that they take heed of *a lifted up ſpirit*, the greateſt *cloſer* of the *heart* againſt the truth of God. He hath promiſed, to teach the *humble* and the *lowly* in mind; the *proud* he beholdeth a farre off. Is not this the great reaſon, that the *Rulers beleeve not on him*, and the *Nobles lay not their necks to the yoake of the Lord*, even becauſe their *hearts are lifted up within them*, and ſo lye in an unteachable frame before the Lord.

3. The *truth* being revealed to them, and their owne hearts made acquainted therewith, after their *perſonall engagements*, to the practice of the power of godlineſſe, according to the *Revelation of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*; three things are incumbent on him in reference thereunto.

1. That according to the meaſure of its *Revelation* unto him, he *declare*, or take care that *it be declared* unto others, even *all* committed to his governing charge. The *generall equity*, that is in the obligation of, *ſtrengthening others*, *when we are confirmed*, *deſiring* them to be *like* our ſelves, in all participations of grace from God, the nature of *true zeale* for the glory and Name of the Lord, are a ſufficient warrant for this, yea demand the *performance* of this duty. So *Jehoſhaphat* being inſtructed in the wayes of God, ſent *Princes and Prieſts* to teach it in all the Cities and Townes of *Judah*, 2 *Chron.* 17. 8, 9, 10. As alſo did *Hezekiah*, 2 *Chron.* 30. 6, 7, 8. Let this then be our firſt *Poſition*.

1. *It belongs to the duty of the ſupreme Magiſtrate, the Governour, or Shepheard of the People in any Nation, being acquainted with the mind of God, to take care that the truth of the Goſpell be Preached to all the people of that Nation, according to the way appointed, either ordinary, or extraordinary.*

I make no doubt but God will quickly reject them from their *power*, who *knowing their Maſters will*, are negligent herein.

2. As he is to *declare* it, ſo he is to *protect* it from all violence, whatever. *Jeſus Chriſt*, is the great *King of Nations*, as well as the holy *King of Saints*. His Goſpell hath a *right* to

be

be preached in *every Nation*, and to *every creature* under heaven. Who ever forbids or hinders the free passage of it, is not onely sinfull and *impious* toward God, but also *injurious* towards men. Certainly the *Magistrate* is to protect every one, and every thing, in their *own right*, from the *violence* and injury of unruly men. In the *preaching* and *receiving* the Gospel, there is a *right* acted, superior to all earthly *priviledges* whatever. In this then the Magistrate is to protect it, that under him the professors thereof, *may leade a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlinesse and honesty.* And for this cause, they to whom the *Sword* is committed, may with the *sword* lawfully defend the Truth, as the *undoubted right*, and priviledge of those who do enjoy it, and of which they cannot be *deprived* without the greatest injury. *Jephthah* layd it down as the ground of the equity of the *warres* he waged against the *Ammonites, That they would possesse what the Lord their God gave them to possesse*; the *defence* whereof, he pursued to the subversion of their (at first) *invading* enemies: *Judg.* 11.24.33. (it is no new thing to *begin* in defence, and *end* in offence). Now, if the *truth* be *given* us of the Lord our God, to possesse, certainly it may be contended for, by those who owe *protection* thereunto; And if this were not so, we may pray, and prevail for the prosperity of those in *Authority*; and yet when we have done, not have a *right* to *a quiet and peaceable life*; Let this then be the *second* assertion.

The Gospel being preached, and declared as of right it ought to be, it is the duty of the Magistrate, by the power wherewith he is entrusted, to protect and defend it against all, or any persons, that by force, or violence shall seek to hinder the progresse, or stop the passage of it under what pretence soever. 2 Pos.

And that a neglect of this also, will be attended with the *anger* of the Lord, and the kindling of his wrath, shall not long be doubted of any.

Thirdly, the *protecting, assisting,* and *supporting* of all the *professors of it*, in that *profession*, and in wayes of truths appointment, for the *practice* of that which is embraced, and the *furtherance* of it, towards them who as yet embrace it not, is also required, and on this there are sundry parts

1. That seeing Christ Jesus hath appointed his *disciples* to walk in such *societies*, and requireth of them such kinde of worship, as cannot be performed without their meeting together ὁμοθυμαδὸν, in one *place*, that he either *provide*, or grant being provided, the use of such *places* under his protection, as may in all, or any kinde be *suited*, and *fitted* for that *end* and purpose. And the *ground* of this is:

1. From the Right which the *Gospel of Christ* hath to be received amongst men, according to his *own appointment*; whether *that* be the *appointment* of *Christ*, or no, amongst us, is no *question*.

2ly, Because the *Magistrate* hath the *sole power* of all *publick places*, and the *protection* of them, is committed to him alone, by virtue of that consent into government which is among any people. *This proved as above.*

2ly, A *protection* in the use of those *places*, and all things exercised in them, answerable to that which he *doth* and is *bound* to grant unto men in their own *private dwellings*, and families. The Reason why I am *protected* from all hurt or *violence* in *my family*, is because I have a *Right* to dispose of all things in my family being mine own, and so hath not another; It was asserted before, that *Christians* have a *Right* to the *ordinances* of Christ, and *Truth* a *Right* to be at liberty. And therefore, if any shall *invade*, *disturbe*, or *trouble them* in their *rights*, and *liberties*, he is bound *ex officio* to give them a protection, *not bearing the sword in vain.*

Now being in my family, in my *private house* the assistance of those in *Authority* is due:

1. In respect of *them without.*
2. In respect of *them within.*

1. For them without, if any *one* will against my consent, intrude himself upon my *family* enjoyments, to share with me, or violently come to take away that is mine, or disturb me in the quiet possession of it, the Magistrate takes *cognizance* of such *disturbances*, and punisheth them according to equity. *Suteably*, if any *person* or *persons* whatsoever, shall with *violence* put themselves upon the *enjoyments* of such *ordinances* as those enjoying the *Rights* of the *Gospel* have obtained

tained to themselves, or shall come in their *celebration* of them, to cause disturbance, certainly, that *Magistrate* protects not every one in his undoubted *Rights*, who doth not accommodate the wronged parties, with the *assistance* of his *power* to the punishment of the transgressors.

2. For *house dwellers*, *servants*, or any others, who may break out into such *offences*, and incorrigibleness, as the amendment thereof, may be beyond what I am intrusted to do, to any, by *Law* of *God* or *man*, and shall not the *Magistrate* here also interpose? is not his *assistance* here abundantly required and alwayes granted?

From *parity of Reason* is it not as due for their protection, who in the enjoyment of their *publick religious Rights* may receive *disturbance*, and be under force, from some, *incorrigible* by any Rule among themselves. For instance, suppose, a *person* justly *excommunicated*, and ejected any society of *Christians* as to any spirituall communion, yet will with outward *force* and *violence*, put himself upon them in their closest acts of communion, doubtlesse their *Rights*, are here to be by *power preserved*.

3. That whereas the *Preachers of the Gospel* are now to be *maintained* in an ordinarie way, and to expect their *supportment* in an usuall course of providence, and seeing that *many* to whom we have proved that the Gospel is to be declared, by the care of the *Magistrate*, will not, or cannot make such *provisions* for them as is needfull, in these last evil daies of the world, it is incumbent on those *nursing Fathers*, to provide for them, who because of their *continuall labours* in the work of the Lord, are dis-inabled, to make provision for themselves. Where *Churches* are setled according to the *Rule* of the Gospel, and not too much *straightned* by *reason* of want, there may be an *alteration* as to this proposall. That this *ingagement* lyes first upon the Churches, was seen of old; Hence that caution or Canon, of the *Councell of Chalcedon*, *cap. 6.* μηδεὶς χειροτονείσθω ἀπολελυμένος, let none be ordained at large: *Ne dicatur, mendicat in palæstra infelix Clericus*, saies the *Scholiast*: lest he should be driven to *begge* for want of *maintenance*.

This being the summe of what as to this head, I have to

assert, I shall give in the proofs of it, and then draw some further Positions.

1. The bottome of the whole, ariseth from that *right* which the Gospel hath to be preached to all Nations and people, and that *right* paramount to all *civill sanctions* and constitutions, which every soul hath to receive it in the profession thereof. And all this flows from the *donation* of the Father unto *Jesus Christ*, whereby he is *made heir of all things*. Hebr. 1. 3. *Having the Nations given him for his inheritance, the utmost parts of the earth for his possession:* Psal. 2. 8. Being also *Lord of lords*, and *King of kings*, acting nothing in taking *possession* of his own, but what his *soveraignty* bears him out in.

2. All *this* tends to the *apparent good*, of those committed to his charge, that they may leade their lives *in godlinesse and honesty*, which is the very *chief end* of *Magistracy* committed unto men. This is directly intended, all other things come in by *accident*, and upon suppositions.

3. No person living can pretend to the least *injury* by this, none is deprived, none wronged.

4. The *precepts* given unto them, and the *promises* made concerning them, do abundantly confirm all that hath been asserted. *Psal.* 2. 10, 11. they are commanded *as Kings and Judges* to serve the *Lord, in promoting the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ*. And it is promised, *Isa.* 49. 23. that *they shall be nursing Fathers, and nursing Mothers to the Church* of Christ, even then, when she shall *suck the brests of Kings* (earthly things are the milk of kingly brests) *when her officers shall be peace, and her exactors righteousnesse:* Isa. 60. 16, 17. This at least, reacheth to all we have ascribed to them. All is but bowing the *knee of Magistracy at the Name of Jesus*.

Hence are *these* Positions.

3 Pos. *The providing or granting of places requisite for the performance of that worship which in the Gospel is instituted, is the duty of the Christian Magistrate.*

4 Pos. *Protection as to peace and quietnesse in the use of the ordinances, of the Lord Jesus Christ, from violent disturbers, either from without, or within, is also incumbent on him.*

Support-

Supportment and proviſion as to earthly things, where regularly failing, is of him required. 5 Poſ.

And in the *neglect* of any of theſe, that takes *place*, which is threatned, *Iſa.* 60. 12. Two or three *conſectaries* added hereunto, ſhall cloſe this part of the Magiſtrates power, or rather duty about the things of Religion: as,

Poſitive actings by way of ſupportment and aſſiſtance, maintenance, allowance of publick places, and the like, in the behalf of perſons deviating from the truth, in thoſe things wherein they deviate, is contrary to the rule of the Word, and duty of them in Authority. For, Con: 1.

Error hath neither *right*, nor *promiſe*, nor is any *precept* given in the behalf thereof.

The defence and protection of erring perſons, from violence and injury, in thoſe things wherein they have a right, is no acting of his duty about religious things; but a meer dealing for the preſervation of humane ſociety, by the defence of perſons, not acting againſt the rules thereof. Con: 2.

Every particular minute difference, among the profeſſors of the truth, cannot be proved to come under the cognizance of the Magiſtrate, he being to attend the worſhip which for the main is acceptable to God in Chriſt, neither do any teſtimonies extend his duty any further: Hence Con: 3. For this cauſe the Emperors of old ſtill allowed the Novatians the liberty of worſhip.

Corola: *The preſent differences about Church ſociety, and the ſubject or ſeat of diſcipline, which are between thoſe diſſenters, who are known by the names of Presbyterians, and Independents, as they are in themſelves (not heightned by the prejudices, luſts, corruptions, and intereſts of men) hinder not at all, but that the Magiſtrate is bound to the performance of the duties before mentioned unto both parties.* And the Reaſons of this are, becauſe

1. The things wherein they are agreed, are clearly as *broad*, as the Magiſtrates duty can be *ſtretched to cover* them.

2. Neither *party* (I am perſwaded) in their retyred thoughts, dare avow the *main* of the worſhip by their *diſſenters* embraced, to be *as ſuch*, rejected of the Lord.

3. No *example* in the world, can be produced out of the *old* Teſtament, or *New*, or *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, of a forcible *deciſion* of ſuch minute differences. See *Socrat: Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib.* 6. *cap.* 20.

2. Corol.

2. Corol: *All the plea of persons erring in doctrine or worship, is not, from what the Magistrate must do, but from what he may not do.*

And this for the *first* part shall suffice.

Secondly, there is *another part* of the Magistrates power, the *other side* of his sword to be exercised towards the *opposition* of that *truth* which he hath embraced: and this hath a twofold object.

1. *Things.*
2. *Persons.*

Things are of 2. sorts:
1. *Wayes of worship.*
2. *Outward Appearances, Monuments, Accommodations and Declarations of those wayes.* Of the *first*, I shall speak afterwards.

By the *second*, I mean, all the *outward attendencies* of any false or erronious worship, which are either *helps* to, or *declarations* of the superstition, idolatry, error, or falsenesse of it; as *Temple* for idolatrous service, *Crosses*, *pictures*, and the like abused *Relicks* of old unwarranted zeal.

Now concerning these, I affirm.

1. That the Magistrate ought not to make *provision* of any *publick places* for the practise of any such *worship* as he is *convinced* to be an abomination unto the Lord. When I say he ought not to make *provision*, I understand, not onely *a not actuall caring* that such be, but also a caring that *such may not* be. He should not have a *negation* of acting as to any thing of *publick* concernment. His not opposing, here is providing. For instance; He must not allow, that is, it is his duty to oppose, the setting apart of *publick places*, under his protection for the service of the *Masse*, (as of late in *Somerset House*) or for any kinde of worship *in it self disallowed*, because *not required*, and so, not *accepted*. This were to be bound to help forward *sin*, and that such *sin* whereof he is *convinced*, which is repugnant to the whole *revealed* will of God. A *Magistrate*, I told you before, is not to act according to what he *may* do, but what he *must* do: Now it cannot be his duty to further sin.

2. Out-

2. Outward *monuments*, wayes of declaring and holding out *false* and *idolatrous* worship, he is to *remove*: as the *Papists* Images, Altars, Pictures, and the like, *Turks Mosckes*, *Prelates* Service book. Now these are of two sorts.

1. Such things as in their *whole use and nature*, serve onely for the carrying on of worship, in it self wholly false, and meerly *invented*. As *Altars*, *Images*, *Crosses*.

2. Such as were used for the carrying on of *worship true* in it self, though vilely corrupted, as praying, and preaching; such are those places commonly called, *Churches*.

The *first* are to be *abolished*, the *latter* aright used. (I speak as to publick appearances, for private disquisitions after such things, I may be otherwise minded.) The Reason of this *difference*, is evident to all.

Thus in dayes of old, *Constantine* shut up *Pagans Temples*: *Euseb. de vita Constant. lib.* 4. *cap.* 23, 24. and demolished some of the most filthy of them: *lib.* 3. *cap.* 52. *Theodosius* utterly cast them to the ground, though not without some *blows and bloodshed*. *Socrat: Eccles. Hist. lib.* 5. *ca.* 16. The command of God for the abolishing all *monuments* of Idolatry, *Deut.* 12. 1, 2, 3. with the commendation of those *Kings of Judah* who accordingly performed this duty, 2 *Chron.* 17. 6. and 30. 14. are enough to confirm it, and to bottome *this Position*.

It is the duty of the Magistrate not to allow any publick places for (in his judgement) false and abominable worship, as also to demolish all outward appearances and demonstrations of such superstitious, idolatrous and unacceptable service. 6 *Pos.*

Let *Papists* who are *Idolaters*, and *Socinians* who are *Anthropolatræ*, plead for themselves.

Now secondly for *persons*, there seems something more of *difficulty*, yet certain clear *rules* may be proposed concerning them also, to hold out when they and their proceedings come under the cognizance of the *Civil Magistrate*, and are obnoxious to the sword which he beareth. And they are these.

1. Such *persons*, as having embraced any false *principles and perswasion* in, or about things concerning *God* and his *worship*, do pursue the upholding or *propagating* of such

principles,

principles, in a disorderly manner to the disturbance of civill society, are doubtlesse under his *restraining power*, to be acted and put forth in such wayes as to other persons, running out into the *same*, or the *like* compasse of disorder, upon other *grounds*, and from the instigation of other *lusts*. The *pretence of disturbance and confusion* upon the *bearing* with differences in opinion about things commanded in Religion, we before rejected as a *colour* fitted chiefly for the *waring* of persecution. But actuall *disturbances* indeed, must have actuall *restraints*. For instance; If a man being perswaded that the power of the Magistrate, is in Christian Religion, groundlesse, unwarrantable, unlawfull, should thereupon stir up the *people* to the abolishing, and removall of that *power*, such *stirrings up*, and such *actings* upon that instigation, are, *as* opposite to the Gospel of Christ (which opposeth no lawfull regiment among the sons of men) so also *prejudiciall* to humane society, and therefore to be proceeded against by them who bear not the sword in vain. This *case* we know happened once in *Germany*, and may do so again in other places. If such as these suffer, it is as *murderers, or theeves, or evill doers, or busie-bodies in other mens matters*; which is a shamefull thing, no way commendable or praise worthy. 1 *Pet.* 4. 15.

2. If any *persons* whatsoever, under any *pretence* whatsoever, shall offer *violence* or disturbance to the *professors* of the true worship of God, so owned, established, and confirmed as *above* said, in, and for the *profession* of that true, so *owned* worship, service and declaration of the minde of God, *such persons* are to feare that power, which is *the minister of God, and a revenger to them that do evill*. Let us *suppose* of them, what they suppose, and for their own *justification and support* in irregular wayes, bear out of themselves, that they enjoy the truth, others walking in paths of their own; yet then, this practise is contrary to that *prime dictate of nature*, which none can pretend ignorance of, *viz: Do not that to another which thou wouldst not have done unto thy self.* If men that would not think *it equitable* to be so dealt with as they deal with others, supposing themselves in their conditions, do

yet

yet ſo deal with them, they are αὐτοκατάκριτοι, and do pronounce ſentence againſt themſelves, out of their own mouthes. This then deſerveth *puniſhment*, and breaking out to the diſturbance of *publick order*, ought to be puniſhed. We before proved the protection *of publick places* to belong to the Magiſtrate: ſo that he not onely may, but if he will not be falſe to him by whom he is intruſted, he muſt put forth his Authority for *the ſafe guarding* and revenging of them. Yea alſo and this rule may paſſe, when ſome things in the way publickly eſtabliſhed, are truly offenſive. What the ancient Chriſtians thought of the zeal of *Audas* a Chriſtian Biſhop, who would needs demoliſh a *Pagan Temple* in *Perſia*, I know not, but I am ſure his diſcretion is not much extolled, who by that one *fiery* act of deſtroying πυρεῖον, or Temple of ſlain, occaſioned a cruell *perſecution* of 30. yeers continuance. *Theod. Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib* 5. *cap.* 139.

3. When any have entertained any *ſingular opinion*, in matters of great *weight and importance*, ſuch as *neerly* concern the glory of God, and the minds of Chriſtians in reverence of his holy name, are moſt *tenderly* affected withall, ſo that without much *horror* of minde, they can ſcarſe hear thoſe errors, whereby thoſe grand truths are oppoſed, yet thoſe perſons, who have entertained ſuch uncouth opinions, ſhall not be content, *ſo to have done*, and alſo in all lawfull wayes (as to civill ſociety) endeavoured to *propagate* the ſaid *opinions* to others, but in the purſuit of this their *deſigne* of oppoſing truth, ſhall *publickly* uſe ſuch expreſſions, or perform ſuch acts, as are fit to powre *contempt and ſcorn* upon the truth which they do oppoſe, reviling *it* alſo, or *God* himſelf ſo repreſented, as he is in the truth they abominate, with odious and execrable appellations, (as for inſtance, the calling the holy Trinity, *Tricipitem Cerberum*) if the queſtion be put, whether in this caſe the *Magiſtrate* be not obliged to vindicate the honour of God, by *corporall reſtraints*, in ſome degrees at leaſt upon the *perſons* of thoſe men, truly for my part, I incline to the *affirmative*. And the Reaſon hereof is this; Though men, through the *incurable blindneſſe* of their minds, falling into *error* of judgement,

and *miſ-interpretation* of the Word, may diſ-beleeve the Deitie of *Chriſt*, and the *holy Spirit*, yet that any *pretence* from the Word, *perſwaſion* of conſcience, or *dictate* of Religion, ſhould carrie them out to *reviling opprobrious ſpeeches* of *that*, which of God, is held out contrary to their *apprehenſions*, is falſe and remote from *Reaſon* it ſelf. For this cauſe *Paul* ſaies he was a *blaſphemer*, not becauſe being a Jew, he diſ-beleeved the Goſpel, but becauſe ſo diſ-beleeving it, he moreover loaded the *truths* thereof, with *contumelious* reproaches. Such *expreſſions* indeed differ not from thoſe *piercing* words of the holy name of God which he cenſured to death: *Levit.* 24. 15. but onely in this, that there ſeemeth in *that* to be a plain oppoſition unto *light*, in this not ſo. The like may be ſaid of a Jew's crucifying a dogge.

4. There are a ſort of perſons termed in Scripture, ἄτακτοι, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 14. ἀσχήμονες, *Act.* 17. 5. ἄτοποι, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 2. ἀνυπότακτοι, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9. and the like, diſorderly; vagabond, wandring, irregular perſons, fixed to no *calling*, abiding in no *place*, taking no care of their *families*, that under a *pretence* of teaching the *truth*, without *miſſion*, without *call*, without *warrant*, uncommanded, undeſired, do go up and down, from place to place, *creeping into houſes*, &c. Now that ſuch *wayes* as theſe, and *perſons* in theſe wayes, may be *judicially* inquired into, I no way doubt. The ſtory is famous of *Seſoſtris* King of *Egypt*, who made a *Law*, that all the Subjects of his kingdom, ſhould once a yeer give an account of their way and manner of living, and if any one were found to ſpend his time *idly*, he was certainly puniſhed; and the Laws of moſt *Nations* have provided that their people ſhall not be *wanderers*, and whoſoever hath not a place of abode, and imployment, is by them a *puniſhable vagabond*. And in this by much experience of the *wayes*, walking and converſe of ſuch perſons, I am exceedingly confirmed in. I did as yet never obſerve any other iſſue upon ſuch *undertakings*, but ſcandall to Religion, and trouble to men in *their civill* relations.

5. When men by the *practiſe* of any *vice* or ſin, draw others to a pretended *Religion*, or by pretence of *Religion* draw

draw men to any *vice* or known sin, let them be twice punished, for their reall *vice*, and *pretended* Religion. The truth is, I have been taught exceedingly to dis-beleeve all the strange *imputations* of wickednesse and uncleannesse, that are imposed upon many, to be *either the end* or the *medium* of the practise of that *communion* in *Religion* which they do professe and imbrace: I remember that when I was a boy, all those *stories* were told me of *Brownists and Puritans*, which afterward, I found it to have been long before, the forgeries of *Pagans*, and imposed on the *primitive* Christians. I dare boldly say I have heard *stories* of them an hundred times, holding out that *very thing*, and those deeds of darknesse, which *Minutius Felix* holds out in the tongue of an *Infidel* concerning the Christians of those dayes; but yet because sundrie *venerable persons* to whom Antiquity hath given *sanctuary* from being arraigned in the point of false testimony, have left it upon record of sundry *Hereticks* in their dayes, as the (*Gnosticks* & others) that they were conjoyned into *societies tesseræ pollutionis*, and some assert that the like *iniquities* are not wholly buried, I made the *supposition*, and hope that if they *depose* themselves from *common sence and reason*, the *Magistrate* will never exalt them to the priviledge and exemption of Religion.

In these, and such like *cases* as these, when men shall break forth into *disturbance* of common order and enormities against the *light of nature*, beyond all positive command of any pretended Religion whatsoever, that the Magistrate ought to set *hedges* of thornes in their wayes, sharpned according to their severall delinquencies; I suppose no man not abhord of *common sense*, can once hesitate or doubt. And I am the more inclin'd to assert a *restraint* to all *such* as these, because it may be established to the *height*, without the least prejudice unto the *truth*, though *persons erring* should injoy the place of authority.

That which now remaineth in this *head*, to be considered, is concerning persons *maintaining* and upholding any great and *pernicious* errors, but in *such* wayes, as are not by any of the former *disorders* to be brought under the cogni-

zance of the *Civill Magistrate*, but *good, honest, allowable*, and peaceable in themselves, not at all to be questioned, but in reference to the things that are carried on, — in and by those wayes; as *communication* by discourse, and *private preaching*, and the like. Now concerning these, it is *generally* affirmed, that persons maintaining any *error* in or against any *fundamentall Article* of faith, or Religion, and that with obstinacy or pertinacie, after conviction, ought to be proceeded against, by the authority of the civill *Magistrate*, whether unto *death or banishment, imprisonment or confiscation of goods.*

Now unto this, supposing, what I have written *heretofore*, concerning the *incompetency* of *all*, and the *non-constitution* of any *Judge* in this case, with the Answers — given at the beginning of this *Treatise*, to the most of the places, produced usually for the affirmative, reserving the consideration of pressing *conformity* to the next head, to be handled: I shall briefly give in my thoughts: and,

1. That I cannot but observe, that in the *question* it self, there are sundry things, *gratis* assumed: as,

1. That it is *known* and confessed, what Articles in Religion are *fundamentall*; and this also to the Magistrate: when no one thing among *Christians* is more *questionable*; most accounting them so, (be they what they will) wherein they differ from others. So that one way or other, all *dissenters* shall be hooked in, *directly* or *indirectly* to *clash* upon fundamentals. In this, *Papists* are secure, who make the *Churches* Propositions sufficient to make an *Article* fundamentall.

2. That the *persons* holding the error are *convinced*, when perhaps they have been onely *confuted*: between which two there is a wide *difference*; he that holds the truth may be confuted, but a man cannot be *convinced* but by the truth. That a man should be said to be *convinced* of a *truth*, and yet that truth not shine in upon his *understanding*, to the *expelling* of the contrary error, to me is strange. To be *convinced*, is to be over-powred by the *evidence* of that, which before a man knew not; I my self, once knew a *Scholer* invited

to

to a *Diſpute* with another man, about ſomething in *controverſie* in Religion; in his own, and in the judgement of all the by-ſtanders the oppoſing perſon was utterly confuted: and yet the *Scholer* within a few *months*, taught of God, and clearly *convinced*, that it was an error which he had maintained, and the *truth* which he oppoſed. And then, and not *till then*, did he ceaſe to *wonder*, that the other perſon was not *convinced* by his ſtrong *Arguments*, as before he had thought. May not a *Proteſtant* be really worſted in a Diſpute by a *Papiſt?* hath it not ſo ere now fallen out? If not, the *Jeſuites are egregious lyars*. To ſay a man is convinced, when either for want of *skill*, and *ability*, or the *like*, he cannot maintain his *opinion*, to, and againſt, *all men*, is a meer conceit. The *truth* is, I am ſo far from this *moroſe* ſeveritie of looking upon all erring perſons as *convinced*, that have been *confuted*, that I rather in *charity* incline to beleeve, that no erring perſon whileſt he *continues* in his error, is convinced. It will not eaſily enter into my *dull* apprehenſion, how a man can be *convinced* of an *error* (that is enlightned with a contrary truth) and yet hold that *error* ſtill: I am loth to charge more *corrupt and vile affections* upon any, then do openly appear; That of *Paul* affirming that ſome men are *ſelf-condemned*, is quite of another nature: I think a perſon is ſaid to be *convinced*, not when there is a *ſufficiency* in the means of conviction, but when there is ſuch an *efficacy* in them, as to *lay hold* upon his underſtanding.

5. That they are *obſtinate* and *pertinacious* is alſo a *cheap ſuppoſall*, taken up without the *price* of a proof. What we call *obſtinacy*, they call *conſtancy*: and what we condemne them for, as *pertinacy*, they embrace as *perſeverance*: as the *conviction* is *impoſed*, not *owned*, ſo is this *obſtinacy*, if we may be *judges* of other mens *obſtinacy*, all will be plain: but if ever they get *uppermoſt*, they will be *judges* of ours: Beſides, I know not what *good* it will do us, or how it will *advantage* our cauſe, to ſuppoſe men *obſtinate* and convinced before we puniſh them: no ſuch *qualifications* being any where in the book of God *urged* in perſons deſerving puniſhment: if they have committed the *crime*, whereunto the *penalty* is annexed,

annexed, be they *obstinate* or not, they shall be punished.

But now *supposing* all this, that we are clear in all *fundamentals* that we are *convinced*, that they are *convinced*, and doubt not but that they are *obstinate*, if they keep themselves in the former bounds, what is to be done? I say, besides what we spake at the entrance of this *discourse*, I shall as to any wayes of *corporall coaction* and restraint, oppose some few things.

1. The *non-constitution* of a *Judge* in case of *heresie*, as a thing civilly *criminall*. As to *spirituall censures* and an Ecclesiasticall judgement of errors, and false doctrines, we finde them appointed, and a *lawfull Judge* as to the determining concerning them, divinely instituted: so that in such *wayes*, they may be warrantably proceeded against. *Revel.* 21. 3. But now, for any *Judge* that should make *disquisition* concerning them, or proceed against them as things *criminall*, to be punished with civill censures, I conceive the *Scripture* is silent: And indeed, who should it be? The *custome* of former ages was, that *some persons* of one sort, should determine of it as to *right*, *viz:* that *such* or such a thing, was *heresie*, and such or such a one, an *Heretick*, (which was the work of *Priests* and *Prelates*) and *persons* of another sort, should *de facto* punish, and determine to be punished, *those*, so adjudged by the former: and these were as they called them the *secular Magistrates*, officers of this *world*. And indeed, had not the *God of this world* blinded their eyes, and the *God of the spirits of all flesh* hardened their hearts, they would not have so *given up* their power, to the *Man of sin* as to be made so *sordidly* instrumentall to his *bloody* cruelty: We read *Jer.* 26. 10, 11. that the *Priests and Prophets assemble themselves in judgement*, and so pronounce *sentence* upon the Prophet *Jeremy* that he should *dye* for a false Prophet, *v.* 12. *Jeremy* makes his appeal to the *secular Magistrate* and all the people, who taking *cognizance* of the cause, pronounce sentence in the behalf of the condemned person, against the *Priests* and Prophets, and deliver him whether they will or not, *v.* 16. I spare the Application of the story: but that *Princes* and *Magistrates* should without cognizance of the *thing*, or

cause,

cauſe, proceed to *puniſhment* or cenſure of it, upon the judgement of the *Prieſts*, condemning ſuch or ſuch a man for an *heretick*, or a falſe prophet, *bleſſed be the Lord*, we have no warrant: Had this *proceeding* been regular, *Jeremy* had dyed without mercy for a falſe prophet, as *thouſands* ſince, ſtanding before the Lord in his ſpirit have done. This courſe then, that the *civill Magiſtrate* ſhou'd proceed to *ſentence* of corporall puniſhment, upon others *judging* of the fault, is *vile*, *ſordid*, *unwarrantable*, and exceedingly unworthy of any rationall man, much more ſuch as are ſet over the people of the Land: that the ſame perſons muſt *determine* of the *cauſe*, and appoint the puniſhment is clear: Now who muſt theſe be? are they the *Miniſters* of the Goſpel? of all others, they are the moſt likely to be the moſt *competent* Judges in ſpirituall cauſes: let it then be ſo; but then alſo, they muſt be the *determiners* and inflicters of the *puniſhment* upon default: now let them powre out upon *obſtinately erring perſons*, all the *vengeance*, that God hath betruſted them withall. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnall, but mighty through God*, &c. By this courſe, *Admonition*, *Avoiding*, *Rejection*, *Excommunication*, will be the utmoſt that can be inflicted on them: which for my part I deſire may be exerciſed to the utmoſt extent of the rule. 2ly, ſhall the *Magiſtrate* be made judge of the *cauſe*, as well as of the *perſon*? is he entruſted to determine, what is *error*, what not; what *hereſie*, what not; who is an *Heretick*, who not; and ſo what *puniſhment* is due to ſuch, and ſuch errors, according to the *degrees*, wherein they are? Why firſt, I deſire an inſtitution of this *ordinance* in the Church? where is the *Magiſtrate* entruſted with ſuch a power? where are *rules* preſcribed to him in his proceedings? 2ly, is not a *judiciary determination* concerning truth and error (I mean truths of the Goſpel) a meer *Church act*? and that *Church power*, whereby it is effected? muſt not then the Magiſtrate *quâ talis* be a Church officer? will men of this minde, tolerate *Eraſtianiſme*? 3ly, if there be a twofold *judicature* appointed for the ſame *perſon*, for the ſame *crime*, is it not becauſe *one crime* may in divers reſpects fall under ſeverall conſiderations? and muſt

Of Judgements.

not:

not these *considerations* be preserved *immixed*, that the formall reason of proceeding in one *Court*, may not be of any *weight* in the other? We proved before, and it is granted of all, that the *Church* is *Judge* in case of *heresie* and error, as such, to proceed against them, as contrary to the Gospel; their *opposition* to the faith delivered to the Saints, is the formall reason upon which that proceedeth to censure: if now *this* be afterwards brought under another *sentence*, of another *Judicature*, must it not be under another consideration? Now what can this be, but its *disturbance* of civill society, which when it doth so, not in *pretence*, but *really* and actually, none denyes it to be the Magistrates *duty* to interpose with his power. 4ly, if the Magistrate be *Judge* of *spirituall offences*, and it be left to him to determine, and execute judgement in such *proportion*, as he shall think meet according to the qualitie and degrees thereof; it is a very strange and unlimited *arbitrarinesse* over the lives & estates of men: and surely they ought to produce very clear *testimonies*, that they are entrusted from the Lord *herewith*, or they can have no great *quiet* in acting. 5ly, it seems strange to me, that the *Lord Jesus Christ* should commit this *Architechtonicall* power in his house, unto Magistrates, foreseeing of what sort the *greatest number* of them would be, yea *determining* that they should be such, for the tryall and affliction of his own. View the times that are *past*, consult the stories of *former ages*, take a *catalogue* of the *Kings* and *Rulers* that have been, since first Magistrates outwardly embraced *Christian Religion* in this, and other Nations, where the Gospel hath been planted, and ask your own *consciences* whether *these be the men*, to whom this high trust in the house of God is committed. The truth is, they no sooner left serving the *Dragon* in the persecution of the Pagans, but presently in a very few yeers, they gave up their power to the *beast*, to set up another State in opposition to the *Lord Jesus Christ* and his Gospel: in the supportment whereof, the most of them continue labouring till this very day. *Hæc manus Trojam exigent?* What may be added in this case, I refer to another opportunity.

2. Gospel

2. Gospel *constitutions* in the case of *heresie* or error, seems not to favour any course of violence; I mean of civil penalties. Foretold it is, that *heresies* must be, 1 *Cor.* 11.19. but this, for the *manifesting of those that are approved*, not the destroying of those that are not; I say destroying, I mean with temporall *punishment*, that I may adde this by the way; for all the *arguments* produced for the punishment of *hereticks*, holding out *capitall censures*, and these being the tendance of all beginnings in this kinde, I mention onely the *greatest*, including all other *arbitrary penalties*, being but steps of walking to the utmost censures. Admonitions, and Excommunication upon rejection of admonition, are the highest constitutions (I suppose) against such persons: *Waiting with all patience upon them that oppose themselves, if at any time God will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth*: imprisoning, banishing, slaying is scarcely a *patient waiting*; God doth not so wait upon unbeleevers. Perhaps those, who call for the *sword* on earth are as unacquainted with their own spirits, as those that called for *fire* from heaven, *Luk.* 12. And perhaps the *parable* of the *tares* gives in a positive rule as to this whole businesse: occasion may be given of handling it at large: for the present I shall not fear to assert, that the *answers* unto it, borrowed by our *Divines* from *Bellarmine*, will not endure the triall: we hope that spirituall quiet, and inoffensivenesse *in the whole mountain of the Lord*, which is wrapt up in the wombe of many promises, will at length be brought forth to the joy of all the children of Sion.

3. Sundrie other arguments taken from the nature of faith, heresie, liberty of Conscience, the way of illumination, means of communication of truth, nature of spirituall things, pravitious tendence of the doctrine opposed, if it should be actually embraced by all enjoying authority, and the like; I thought at present to have added, but I am gone already beyond my purposed resting place.

Come we in a few words to the *last thing* proposed (wherein I shall be very brief, the main of what I intended, being already set down) the *power* of the Magistrate to

compell others, to the embracing of that *Religion* and way of worſhip, which he ſhall eſtabliſh and ſet up, which for the *greater advantage* we ſhall ſuppoſe to be the very ſame, both for the things propoſed to be *beleeved*, and alſo *practiſed*, which God himſelf hath *revealed*, and requireth all men every where to embrace. What is to be done, for the ſetling and *eſtabliſhing* of the *profeſſion* of the Goſpel, and the right *apprehenſion* of the minde of God therein, contra-diſtinct from all thoſe *falſe and erronious perſwaſions*, which in theſe, or former dayes are, or have been held forth in oppoſition thereunto, was before declared; how it is to be *ſupported, maintained, protected, defended, ſafe-guarded*, from all oppoſitions, diſturbances, blaſphemings, was then, and there ſet down.

Now ſuppoſing, that *ſundry perſons* living under the *power* and *owning* civill obedience to the Magiſtrate, will not conſent to *ſound doctrine*, nor receive, in *ſome* things, (*fewer* or *more*, *leſſe*, or *greater*), that *form of wholſome words*, which he holds forth, and owns as the minde of Chriſt in the Goſpel, nor *communicate* with him, in the worſhip, which by the Authority of thoſe words, or that truth, he hath as before eſtabliſhed, it is inquired what is the *duty* of the Magiſtrate in reference to the bringing of them into that *ſubjection* which is due unto, and acknowledgement of, the truth; And to this I ſhall briefly give in my Anſwer in theſe following Poſitions.

1. In reference unto *us*, in this *Nation*, the greateſt difficulty in giving a full return to this *queſtion*, ariſeth from the great *diſorder* of the Churches of God amongſt us: were the *precious* diſtinguiſhed from the *vile*, Churches *rightly* eſtabliſhed, and Church diſcipline exerciſed, that Chriſtians were under ſome orderly *view*, and men might be conſidered, in their ſeverall *capacities* wherein they ſtand, an *eaſie finger* would unty the *knot* of this *quære*; but being in that *confuſion*, wherein we are, gathering into *any order* being the great work in hand, I ſuppoſe under favour, that the time is *ſcarce come*, for the propoſall of this queſtion: but yet ſomething may be given in unto it though not ſo

clear,

clear, as the former ſuppoſall being effected, would cauſe it to be.

2. The conſtant practiſe of the *Churches* in former ages, in all their meetings for adviſe and counſell, to conſent into ſome form of wholſome words, that might be a diſcriminating *teſſera* of their *communion* in doctrine, being uſed in prime Antiquitie, as is manifeſt in that *ancient Symbol* commonly eſteemed *Apoſtolicall*, of the chief heads whereof mention in the like Summary is made in the very firſt writers among them, having alſo warrant from the Word of God, and being of *ſingular uſe* to hold out unto all other *Churches* of the world, our apprehenſions of the minde of God, in the chief heads of Religion) may be conſidered: If this be done by the authority of the Magiſtrate, I mean if ſuch a declaration of the truth, wherein the *Churches* by him owned and protected, do conſent, be held out as the confeſſion of that truth which he embraceth, it will be of ſingular uſe unto, yea indeed muſt neceſſarily precede any determination of the former queſtion: of the nature and uſe of *confeſſions*, &c. ſo much hath of late been *learnedly* diſputed, that I ſhall not powre out any of mine own conceptions for the preſent about them, in that haſty tumultuary *manner*, wherein I am enforced to *expoſe* this eſſay.

3. Thoſe who diſſent from the *truth* ſo *owned*, ſo *eſtabliſhed*, ſo decreed, do ſo, either in *leſſe matters* of ſmall conſequence,, and about things, generally confeſſed *not fundamentall*, or in great and more weighty heads of doctrine, acts of worſhip, and the like: both agreeing in this, that they will not hold *communion* as either to all, or ſome parts and duties thereof, which thoſe *Churches* and *perſons* who do embrace the *truth*, ſo *owned*, as before, and act accordingly.

For the *firſt* of theſe, or ſuch as diſſent about things of no great *concernment* in compariſon of thoſe other things wherein they do agree, with them, from whom they do diſſent, I am bold poſitively to aſſert, that, ſaving and preſerving the *Rules* and *qualifications* ſet down under the ſecond head, the Magiſtrate hath no *warrant* from the Word

of God, nor *command*, *rule*, or *precept* to enable him, to *force* such persons to submit unto the *truth* as by him established, in *those things*, wherein they expresse a *conscientious* dissent, or to molest them with any civill *penalty* in case of refusall or non-submission: nor yet did I ever in my life meet with any thing in the *shape* of Reason to prove it, although the great *present clamor* of this Nation, is *punctually* as to this head: what ever be pretended, this is the *Helena* about which is the great contest.

What I pray will warrant him then to proceed?

Will the Laws against Idolatry and Blasphemy? with their sanctions towards the persons of *blasphemers*, and idolaters (for I must ingenuously confesse, all that which in my poore judgement looks with any appearance, of pressing toward *Hæreticidium*, is the *everlasting* equity of those judiciall Laws: and the *Arbitrarinesse* of Magistrates, from a divine *rule* in things of the greatest concernment, to the glory of God if free from them) and that these Laws I doubt will scarcely be accommodated unto any thing under contest now in this age of the world among Christians) but shall I say, a *warrant* taken from hence for the compelling of men, found in so many *fundamentals*, as were it not for the *contest* with them, we would acknowledge *sufficient* for the entertainment of the *Lord Jesus* in their bosomes, to *subject* to, and close with, the things contrary to their present *light* and apprehension, (though under a promise of being taught of God) or to inflict penalties upon a refusall so to do? *Credat Apella.*

Shall the *examples* of extraordinary judgements upon *Idolaters*, false *Prophets*, by *sword* and fire from heaven, (on Magitians, Apostates, and the like) be here produced? Though such *arguments* as these have made thousands weep *tears of blood*, yet the consequence in reason, cannot but provoke *laughter* to all men not wholly forsaken of *directing* principles.

Qu: What then shall be done, they'l say? they have been *admonished*, *rebuked*, *convinced*, must they now be *let alone?*

Ans: Something as to this I shal adde, in the close of this discourse;

courſe; for the preſent let learned *Whitaker* anſwer for me: and *firſt*, to the firſt, of their being *confuted*. *Poſſunt quidem controverſiæ ad externum forum deferri, & ibi deſiniri: ſed conſcientia in eo foro non acquieſcit, non enim poteſt conſcientia ſedari ſine Spiritu ſancto.* Let controverſies (ſaith he) be determined how you pleaſe, untill the conſcience be quieted by the holy Spirit, there will be little peace. Unto which I ſhall not adde any thing, conſidering what I ſaid before of conviction: and to the latter of letting them alone, to their own wayes, *Eccleſiæ quidem optatius eſt levibus quibuſdam diſſenſionibus ad tempus agitari, quam in perfida pace acquieſcere; non ergo ſufficit aliquo modo pacem conſervari niſi illam eſſe ſanctam pacem conſtiterint: Whit: con: 4. de Rom: Pont: qu: 1. cap. 1. ſec: 2.* Better ſome trouble, then a perfidious, compell'd peace: ſee him handle this more at large, with ſome excellent concluſions to this purpoſe. *Con: 4. de Rom. Pont. q. 1. cap. 1. ſ. 19. pa. 48. & 50.*

For theſe then, (and under this head I compare all ſuch perſons as keeping in practiſe within the bonds before laid forth, do ſo far forth hold the foundation, as that neither by *beleeving* what *is* not, or diſ-beleeving what *indeed* is, they do *take* in, or *keep* off, any ſuch thing as *wherewithall* being *embraced*, or without which, being *rejected*, the life of Chriſt cannot in any *caſe* poſſibly conſiſt, nor ſalvation by him be obtained) as the Magiſtrate is not bound by any *rule* or *precept* to *aſſiſt* and maintain them, in the practiſe of thoſe things, wherein they diſſent from the *truth*, ſo he is bound, to *protect them in peace* and quietneſſe in the enjoyment of all *civill rights and liberties*; nor hath he either *warrant*, or allowance, to *proceed* againſt them, as to the *leaſt penalty* for their diſſent in thoſe things, they cannot receive. Attempts for *uniformity* among *Saints*, or *ſuch* as for ought we can conclude, either from their *opinions* or *practiſes may be* ſo, by externall force are purely Antichriſtian.

Now for thoſe that ſtand at a *greater diſtance* from the *publickly* owned and declared truths, ſuch as before we ſpake of, the orderly way of dealing with *ſuch*, is in the *firſt place* to bring them off from the *error* of the way, which they

they have embraced: and untill *that* be done, all thoughts of drawing in their *assent* to *that*, from which at such a distance they stand, is vain and bootlesse. Now what course is to be taken for the effecting of this? *spirituall wayes* of healing are known to all, let them be used, and in case they prove *fruitlesse*, for ought that yet I can perceive, the person of men so erring must be left in the state and condition we described under the *second head*.

And now to drive on this *businesse* any further by way of *conteſt* I will not; my *intention* at the beginning, was onely *positively* to assert, and to give in briefly the *scripturall and rationall* bottoms, and proofs of those assertions; wherein I have gone aside, to *pull*, or *thrust* a line of debate, I have transgressed against my own purpose; I hope it will be pardoned: though I am heartily desirous any thing which passeth my *pen*, may be brought to the test, and *my self reduced* where I have gone amisse, yet my spirit faints within me, to think of *that way* of handling things in *Controversie*, which some men by *reciprocation* of answers, and replyes have wound themselves into *Bolsecke*, and *Staphylus*, and *Stapleton* seem to live again, and much *gall* from beneath to be powred into mens ink. Oh the deep wounds, the Gospel hath received by the mutuall *keen invectives* of learned men: I hope the Lord will preserve me, from being engaged with any man of such a frame of spirit: what hath been asserted may easily be cast up in a few Positions, the *intelligent Reader* will quickly discern what is aymed at, and what I have stood to avow.

If what is proposed, be not satisfactory, I humbly offer to the *Honorable Parliament*, that a *certain number of learned men*, who are *differently minded* as to this businesse of *Toleration*, which almost every where is spoken against, may be desired and *required* to a fair debate of the matter in difference, before their own *Assembly*, that so, if it be possible, some *light* may be given to the *determination* of this thing of so great concernment, in the judgements of all men, both on the one side and on the other, that so they may *try all things, and hold fast that which is good*.

Corol:

Corol: That Magistrates have nothing to do, in matters of Religion, (as some unadvisedly affirm) is exceedingly wide from the truth of the thing it self.

2. Corporall punishments for simple error, were found out to help build the tower of Babell:

Si quid novisti rectius istis
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.

FINIS.

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